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VALUE OF THE BIBLE,

AND

EXCELLENCE

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION:

FOR THE USE OF FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS.

BY NOAH WEBSTER, LL. D.

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The general object of this little book, is, to show the excellence of the Christian religion, and of course, to prove the inestimable value of the book in which this religion is revealed and inculcated. The writer has aimed to present to the reader the evidence of *purpose* or *design* in the works of creation; thus proving the *wisdom* and *benevolence* of the creator, no less than his *unlimited power*. So in the moral system, the adaptation of the laws of God to the best interests of men, both in temporal and spiritual things, is clear evidence of his *wisdom* and *benevolence;* and both in the physical and moral systems, the adaptation of *means* to *ends* affords indisputable proof of *intelligence* in the author.

New Haven, May, 1834.

VALUE OF THE BIBLE.

Read the first chapter of Genesis.

Section 1. *Of the Creator.*—This is the only authentic account we have, of the creation of the Universe. The account supposes the existence of God, a being who existed *before* all created things, and who was possessed of infinite power, a power sufficient to create what did not before exist. Our own reason must assent to the same truth; for we know that mere *matter* like that of the earth, is inert, having no power to act at all; and of course could not create itself.

2. *Manner of creation.*—Of the manner in which divine power was exerted in making what did not before exist, we can have no conception. But the scriptures represent that the heavens and the earth were created by the word or command of God; and that the production of material things was instantaneous. The Psalmist describes the exertion of Almighty power in creation with unequaled brevity and sublimity: "He spoke and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast." Ps. xxxiii, 9.

3. *Original form of the earth.*—When the earth was first created, it was "without form and void;" that is, it was a confused mass of matter, called by pagan writers *chaos*, and enveloped in darkness. The scriptural expression "darkness was upon the face of the deep," indicates that this chaotic mass

was fluid or covered with a fluid, and that the spirit of God moved or acted upon the face of this mass, in the work of creation.

4. *Of light.*—The creation of light is announced in the scripture, in language extremely simple, but strikingly sublime. "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light." The command of God instantly produced that substance which renders things visible to the eyes of created beings, without which we could do nothing with comfort or convenience, and even life might be insupportable. This substance God pronounced to be *good;* and we know this to be true by constant experience.

5. *Of the Day and Night.*—God separated the light from the darkness; the light he called *Day*, and the darkness, *Night.* In our solar system, the Sun is made the chief depository of light. His rays diffuse this substance to all the planets or vast orbs which belong to this system, of which the earth is one. The fixed stars are also depositories of light, and they may be suns, the centers of other systems. When light was created, the evening and the morning were the first day.

6. *Of the Firmament.*—The firmament is properly the vast expanse over or around the earth; the true signification of the word is expanse. In this appear the sun, moon and stars, and in this is the atmosphere, which is composed of air, surrounding the earth. This contains a vast body of water invisible, but which is often condensed in a visible form in clouds or vapor. This fund of water supplies the earth with rain, and when congealed, falls in snow or hail. Thus the water of the atmosphere is separated from the waters of the

ocean, lakes and rivers on the earth. The expanse or firmament is called *heaven*.

7. *Of the Ocean.*—At the command of God, the waters under the heaven were collected into one place, and this collection is called seas or the ocean. This mass of water covers more than three fifths of the surface of the earth. When the water receded from the earth, the dry land appeared, which is called *Earth*.

8. *Creation of plants.*—When the chaos of matter was reduced to form and the water separated from the earth, God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree, yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after its kind." This command produced its effect, and the earth brought forth grass, plants and trees for the sustenance of men and beasts, afterwards to be created. These plants follow the laws which God established for their reproduction. Each plant produces its proper seed, by which the species is continued, and will be continued as long as the earth shall endure.

9. *Creation of the Sun, &c.*—When the earth was thus prepared for the support of men and animals, God created the sun, moon and stars, to give light upon the earth, and to regulate the seasons. Among these were two *great lights*, the *sun* and *moon;* the sun, the inexhaustible source of light, to illuminate and warm the earth, and the moon to receive light from the sun, and reflect it upon the earth, during the night.

10. *Creation of Animals.*—We are next informed that God commanded into existence fishes and fowls; fishes of every kind to fill the waters of the

seas, fowls to fly in the open expanse, above the earth. Then were created cattle and all creeping animals; the earth, the seas and the air were furnished with living beings for the future use of men. And all kinds that were created were pronounced to be good.

11. *Creation of man.*—When the earth was finished, and furnished with all its vegetable and animal productions, God closed the great work of creation by the formation of Man. This race of beings God created in his own image or likeness; with a body erect and a dignified aspect; endowed with a soul and intellect, free from sin; a race of an order superior to that of all other living beings on the earth; and gave him dominion over all the earth, and over all animals. This creation of Man was the work of the sixth day, at the close of which God pronounced every thing he had made to be very good.

Read the second chapter of Genesis.

12. *Origin of the Sabbath.*—In this second chapter of Genesis we have an account of the origin of the Sabbath. When God had finished the heavens and the earth and all the host of them in six days, he rested on the seventh day, and sanctified it. *Sabbath* signifies *rest;* and the Israelites were afterwards commanded to observe the seventh day of the week as a day of rest from labor, a holy day consecrated to the immediate service of God.

13. *The first man.*—In this chapter we have a more particular account of the formation of the first man called Adam. He was made of the dust

of the ground, his body consisting of bones, flesh and blood, was formed of mere inert matter, into which these substances are all converted at his death. But into his nostrils God breathed the breath of life, and he became a living soul. From Adam descended all the human race; all being one species, formed of like materials and with similar intellectual powers.

14. *Garden of Eden.*—When man was made, and with proper faculties to provide subsistence for himself, God planted a garden, called Eden, and placed Adam in it to dress or cultivate it and to keep it. In this garden God caused to grow every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food, so that Adam was abundantly supplied with fruits for sustenance. In this garden was also the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

15. *Divine command respecting the tree of knowledge.*—Of the fruit of the trees in the garden Adam was permitted to eat freely, with the exception of one tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, in the midst of the garden, of whose fruit he was forbidden to eat, under the penalty of death. This tree then was intended to try the first man's obedience to God's commands.

16. *Creation of woman.*—The first man being thus placed in Eden, God provided for him a female companion, by causing him to fall into a deep sleep, and taking one of his ribs, of which he formed a female. This female, said Adam, "is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh," and because she was taken out of man, he called her *woman*. He also gave her the name, *Eve*, as being

the mother of all the human race. The intimate union of Adam and Eve, the progenitors of all mankind, constituted the first marriage, the most endearing and important relation in life.

The power, wisdom and benevolence of God displayed in the works of creation.

17. *The Universe.*—In viewing and contemplating the works of creation, we are struck with astonishment at the magnitude, the variety and the beauty of the bodies which compose the visible Universe. Innumerable resplendent orbs, stationed in the vast extent of space, at inconceivable distances from each other, so as to appear like mere spangles in the sky, though a thousand times larger than this earth, fill us with admiration and amazement. We shrink even from an effort to reach in thought the boundless extent of such a scene; or to comprehend the stupendous power of the creator.

18. *The fixed stars.*—The fixed stars, which shine by their own light and are distinguished from planets by their twinkling, have always the same relative position; and therefore are supposed to be suns or centers of systems. They appear to have no immediate connection with our Solar system; but they adorn the vast concave over our heads, enliven the gloom of night, and delight the eye with their sparkling radiance.

19. *Solar System.*—The system of orbs, of which this earth is a part, consists of the *Sun*, and several planets, primary and secondary. The Sun is stationed in or near the center of this system,

and around it revolve the primary planets at different but vast distances and in different periods of time. Some of these planets are attended with smaller orbs, which revolve about them, and are called secondary planets. One of these is the moon, an orb that revolves around the earth. These planets receive their light from the sun.

20. *The Earth.*—The earth, like the other planets, is round or nearly spherical. It is about ninety five millions of miles from the sun, the center of the system. It has two motions, by one of which are caused the *day* and *night;* and by the other, is determined what we call the *year.* These movements are regular.

21. *Day and Night.*—To form the day and night, the earth is made to revolve on an imaginary line, called its axis. It makes one complete revolution from west to east in twenty four hours. This is called a *diurnal* or *daily* revolution, during which the whole surface of the globe is presented to the sun. That half of the surface which is enlightened by the sun has *day ;* and that half which is turned from the sun has *night.* The darkness of night therefore is the shade of the earth.

22. *Uses of the Day and Night.*—The division of time into day and night is a most benevolent provision for the convenience and comfort, not only of men, but of many species of animals. The light of the sun is necessary to enable men to perform their labors, at the same time, the heat of the sun's rays is necessary or useful in promoting vegetation. Night, on the other hand, is necessary or useful for rest; darkness and stillness being favorable for sleep. Beasts, for the most part, feed

in the day time, and sleep at night. This division of time therefore is a proof of the goodness of the creator, in adapting his works and laws to the welfare of his creatures.

23. *The Year.*—The earth revolves around the sun once in three hundred and sixty five days, and about six hours. This revolution constitutes the year, and is called its *annual* revolution. And by the inclination of its axis to the plane of the ecliptic or path of the sun, so called, the earth receives, at one time, the rays of the sun in such a direction as to be much heated, and this heat constitutes summer. In another part of the year, the rays of the sun strike the earth more oblikely, and produce little heat. This defect of heat constitutes winter. But the sun is always so nearly vertical to the parts of the earth near the equator, as to constitute perpetual summer.

24. *The Moon.*—The small orb which we call the Moon is a secondary planet revolving round the earth once in about twenty nine days, which period constitutes a lunar month. It receives light from the sun, a portion of which is reflected to the earth, illuminating the night with a faint light. When the moon comes directly between the earth and the sun, it hides a part or the whole of the disk of the sun from the inhabitants of the earth. This is a solar eclipse. When the moon, in its revolution, passes through the shadow of the earth, a part or the whole of its face is obscured; and this is a lunar eclipse.

25. *Remarks on the Solar System.*—The admirable adjustment of the solar system to its purposes, is very striking. By the revolution of the earth on its axis, we have a constant succession of

day and night; the one for labor, business and action, the other for rest to refresh the wearied body. The revolution of the earth round the sun determines the year, a regular division of time, highly important and useful; while the position of its axis varies the seasons, causing summer and winter in due succession. While we admire the beauty, order, and uses of this arrangement, we cannot but be surprised at the simplicity of the laws by which it is effected. All the works of God manifest his infinite wisdom, as well as his unlimited power.

26. *The Earth.*—The structure of the earth every where exhibits the wise purposes of the creator. The surface of the earth consists of dry land, or land covered with water, and hence the earth is called *terraqueous*. The land is intended for the habitation of men, and of various animals, many of which are evidently intended for the immediate use of men, and others are doubtless intended to answer some other useful purposes in the economy of the natural world.

27. *Subsistence of men and animals.*—The principal part of the food of man and beast is produced by the earth; and the first thing to be noticed is the *soil* which covers a great portion of its surface. The soil is various; but well adapted to produce different kinds of plants. It is naturally or capable of being made, so loose and soft as to admit the growth and extension of roots, which serve the double purpose of conveying nutriment to plants, and of supporting them in an upright position. The soil is chiefly loam, clay or sand or a mixture of all, and different soils are best adapted to produce different trees and herbage.

28. *Vegetable productions.*—The wisdom and benevolence of the creator are wonderfully manifested in the variety and uses of plants. In the first ages of the world, men fed upon acorns and nuts, the seeds of trees, produced without labor. This mode of subsistence was, in some measure, necessary for mankind, before they had invented tools or learned the cultivation of the soil. When men had multiplied, and learned the uses of grain, then commenced agriculture, the most important occupation of men, and the chief source of subsistence and wealth.

29. *Esculent grains.*—The different species of grain intended for the food of men, are fitted to grow in different climates. Of these rice is one of the principal kinds. It grows only in warm climates, and its qualities are peculiarly fitted for a wholesome diet in such climates, which tend to produce fevers of a bilious type. Probably half of the human race subsist on rice.

30. *Wheat, rye and maiz.*—Next to rice in importance is wheat, which gives us the finest flour and best bread. This plant is fitted to grow in almost every habitable latitude. Rye, though less valuable, constitutes a large portion of food in parts of the earth not fitted to produce rice or wheat. Maiz or Indian corn, a native grain of America, supplies an abundance of nourishing food both for man and beast. This grain is wonderfully fitted to grow in different climates. In the warmer latitudes, where the summer is long, it rises to the highth of twelve or fourteen feet. In the temperate climates where the summer is shorter, it rises only to the highth of seven or eight feet, and

in colder climates, its highth is not more than four or five feet.

31. *Plants of less general use.*—In distributing the materials of food, the creator has given to every country such plants as the climate will bring to perfection. Oats are fitted for cool climates, and in such climates, grow to a larger size than in warmer latitudes. Certain varieties of turneps and potatoes grow to higher perfection in the cool climates of Sweden, Scotland and Nova Scotia, than in the warmer climates and richer soil of more southern latitudes. Such facts prove the benevolence, as well as the wisdom and power of the Creator.

32. *Trees.*—Trees are the largest species of vegetable productions. These are of various kinds, species and varieties; all consisting of a stem and branches, supported by roots which penetrate the earth, convey water or nourishing matter to the stem and branches and sustain the tree in an upright position. The woody part of the tree is protected by a tough bark or rind, and the branches terminate in leaves which imbibe nourishment from the air, and form a thick and beautiful foliage for shade.

33. *Uses of trees.*—Trees furnish men with fuel for fires, and with timber for buildings of all kinds —houses and barns as shelters for men and beasts —fences for inclosing fields—bridges for crossing rivers—and ships for navigating seas and lakes. Some species supply timber for furniture—some, are used for dyeing—some yield gums and resins—and many bear fruits which supply food, for man and beast, or various liquors and spices.—Spices

are productions of the tropical or warmer climates.

34. *Herbaceous plants.*—Great varieties of grasses, or herbaceous plants, cover the face of the earth wherever there is soil to produce them. Many of these are intended as food for cattle and various animals. The substance of such is succulent, or so soft as to be easily chewed or cut with a sythe, that they may be dried and preserved for use in winter. Many of these plants are indigenous, growing without cultivation; but the most useful of the grasses are cultivated. Thus abundant provision is made for the subsistence of cattle, or domestic animals most necessary for the use of men.

35. *Beauty of plants.*—The goodness of the creator is manifested also in the beauty of the vegetable kingdom. The most common color of growing herbage and the leaves of trees is *green;* a color not injurious to the eye, and the more agreeable as being connected with growth and vigor. But nothing can equal the beauty of vegetable blossoms; the variety, richness and delicacy of the flowers which adorn the earth, in the proper seasons, baffle all human art and all attempts to do them justice in description.

36. *Propagation of plants.*—The modes by which plants continue their species, are a wonderful proof of the divine purpose and wisdom. The chief mode is by seeds, which each plant produces, and which fall to the earth, when the plant dies, or at the close of each summer. Each seed contains the germ of a new plant of the same species, which is defended from injury by a hard shell or firm coat, and thus protected, the germ may

continue for years, perhaps for ages, until the seed is placed in a condition to germinate. The seed of some plants is a bulb, growing in the earth, as in the potatoe, the onion and the tulip. Some seeds are fethered that they may be wafted to a distance by wind. Many small seeds are the food of birds, and by them are dispersed. The seeds of rice, wheat and other plants are the chief support of mankind.

Animals.

37. *Variety of Animals.*—For the use of man, and other purposes God created a great variety of animals having bodily powers as perfect as those of mankind, but with intellectual powers much inferior. Their faculties are adapted to their condition. They have what is called *instinct*, a faculty of directing them without any process of reasoning to the means of support and safety. Some of them appear to have powers similar to human reason, as the elephant. Many of them intended for the use of men, are capable of being tamed and taught to perform labor, and various services for mankind.

38. *Land Animals.*—Animals destined to live on land have lungs or organs of life as mankind have, and live by respiration. Their bodies are composed of like materials, bones, flesh, and blood. They move by means of legs and feet, by wings, or by creeping. They are mostly furnished with instruments by which they defend themselves from their enemies, as horns, hoofs, teeth and stings. Some of them subsist on herbage and fruits, par-

ticularly such as are intended for the use of man, as horses, oxen, cows, sheep, camels and elephants. These are called herbivorous or *graminivorous* animals.

39. *Forms of animals.*—The first thing to be observed in the animal kingdom, is the adaptation of the form and propensities of each species to its modes of life, and to its uses. The camel, the horse, the ox and the sheep have four legs, and walk with their heads in a line with their bodies, so that they can take their food from the earth with the mouth, as they stand or walk. The elephant's neck is short, but he has a strong muscular trunk, with which he can feed himself. Most of the large quadrupeds have hoofs consisting of a horny substance for walking on rough ground. But the elephant and camel have a tough musculous foot for walking on sand; thus being fitted for traversing the deserts of Asia and Africa.

40. *The bovine kind and sheep.*—The ox is peculiarly fitted for draft, either by the neck or head and horns, his body is very strong and his neck remarkably thick and muscular. The female is formed for giving milk, and both male and female are easily tamed and very manageable. These animals feed by twisting off the grass or herbage, which they swallow, and when filled, they lie down and chew the cud; that is, they throw up the grass or hay from the stomach and chew it leisurely for more easy digestion. The sheep feeds much in the same manner.

41. *The horse.*—The horse is fitted for draft as well as the ox; but he is also fitted to bear burdens on his back, and his form is more beautiful than

that of the ox. His neck is elegant and his gait noble. In the harness or under the saddle, the horse exhibits an elegant form and motions. The motion of the ox is slow and well adapted to draw heavy burdens or plow rough ground. The horse moves with more rapidity and is most useful on good roads for rapid conveyance, either upon his back or on wheels or runners.

The form and habits of these animals manifest most clearly the purpose of the creator, in fitting them for the use of mankind.

42. *Wild animals.*—Many species of animals live in the forest, and subsist upon herbage or upon the flesh of other animals, without the care of man. Some of these are tamable. Animals which subsist wholly or chiefly on flesh are called *carnivorous.* These are more rapacious and difficult to tame, than the herbivorous species. Yet the cat and the dog, which are carnivorous, are domesticated, and in some respects very useful to mankind. Carnivorous animals are formed for their mode of subsistence; having hooked claws for seizing their prey, and sharp pointed teeth for tearing their flesh.

43. *Animals for food and clothing.*—Many animals are useful to mankind for food and clothing. The ox, the sheep and swine, supply men with a large portion of their provisions. Among rude nations, the skins of animals, with little or no dressing, furnish a warm covering for the body, and skins were the first clothing of Adam and Eve. The wool of the sheep constitutes a principal material for cloth, and next to fur is the warmest covering. Furs are taken from animals inhabiting

the cold regions of the earth. These are the most perfect non-conductors of heat, that is, they best prevent the heat of the body from escaping, and are therefore the warmest clothing.

44. *Reflections.*—In the animal as well as vegetable kingdom, we see the wonderful wisdom and goodness of God. The animals which are most useful to man are easily tamed and subsisted. Some of them assist him in cultivating the earth and carrying on his business; and when they are too old for these services, they are fattened for slaughter, and their skins are dressed for use. Many wild beasts subsist without the care of men, but their skins and furs are converted to important uses. Furs, the warmest covering, are found in the coldest climates. Wool, next to furs in protecting the body from cold, is produced chiefly in the temperate latitudes, where it is most wanted. These facts prove the wisdom of God, and his goodness, in providing for the wants of his intelligent creatures.

45. *Fowls.*—Fowls or birds are winged animals, destined to move with velocity through the air. For this purpose their bodies are made light, and so shaped as to pass through the air in the most advantageous manner; that is, with the least resistance. Their wings are extremely strong, and are easily moved with surprising rapidity; the large fethers or quills being so placed as to form a suitable angle for propelling the body forward; while the small fethers which cover the body and keep it warm, are so laid back one upon another, as to offer no resistance to the air.

46. *Mouth and feet of fowls.*—As fowls are destined to subsist on different species of food, their mouths are fitted for the purpose. Those which feed on small seeds and little insects have generally bills or beaks which are straight and pointed. Those which subsist on flesh have hooked bills for seizing small animals and tearing their flesh. The feet of fowls are also admirably fitted for their modes of life. Those which are destined to light on trees, have toes with sharp nails, which enable them to cling to the small twigs; and some species use their nails for scratching the earth in search of food.

47. *Aquatic fowls.*—Fowls destined to frequent water, and to subsist on fish, have forms adapted to these purposes. Some of them have long beaks for seizing and holding fish; some have longer legs than other fowls, and wade in shallow water in search of food. Others have webbed toes, or palmated feet, that is, the toes are connected by a membrane, which serves as an oar or paddle for propelling them in swimming. The bodies of aquatic fowls form a model, in some measure, for the body of ships; being fitted to move through the water with the least resistance.

48. *Uses of fowls.*—Many fowls are used as food; and some of them constitute our most delicate dishes. Not only the flesh, but the eggs of the domestic species, enter into various articles of cookery. Their fethers form our softest beds, and their quills, in the form of pens, record the events of life, and are made the instruments of preserving and communicating sacred and profane writings to distant nations and ages. The plumage of birds,

presenting a variety of the richest colors, is among the most elegant ornaments of creation; some of the winged race often delight us in our dwellings with their varied notes, while others cause the solitary forest to resound with the melody of their songs. In this department of creation, we discover abundant proofs of the wisdom and benevolence of the creator.

49. *Fishes.*—Fishes are formed to inhabit the waters of the ocean, of rivers and lakes; and for this purpose they have a peculiar structure. They have not lungs like those of land animals, as no air can be imbibed in water, except such as the water contains. Some of them imbibe air with water by their gills; others occasionally rise to the surface of the water and imbibe air; and some species of animals are amphibious, being able to live a long time under water, then betaking themselves to the land.

50. *Form of fishes.*—Fishes being destined to move in a fluid more dense than air, and of course making more resistance to motion, are formed with slender bodies, with a pointed mouth, the body swelling to its full thickness at or near the head, and then gradually sloping to the tail. The body is furnished with fins; those on the back and sides serving to balance the body and keep it in a proper position, while a strong tail, ending in a fin, serves as an oar to propel the body forward.

51. *Uses of fish.*—Many species of fish are used as food, and some of them constitute an important article of commerce. They are produced in the deep in inexhaustible abundance, and cost nothing except the time and labor of catching and curing

them. The largest species, the whale, supplies us with oil for lamps and for various other uses. Our houses and streets are lighted, and the machinery of our manufactories is kept in order, and its movements facilitated by oil formed in the bosom of the ocean, and perhaps on the opposite side of the globe.

52. *Man.*—The last species of living beings created by God, was *man.* This species differs from all other orders of animals in external form, and still more in mental endowments. The form of man is erect and dignified; his body and his limbs are equally distinguished for strength, for beauty and for convenient action. The head at the upper end of his body contains the eyes or organs of sight. These are placed in orbits which protect them from injury; and the better to see in various directions, they are movable by muscles, which turn the balls in a moment. These delicate organs are defended also by lids which may be instantaneously closed to cover them; and the eye-lashes, while they add beauty to the face, serve to protect the eyes from dust and insects.

53. *The mouth, nose and ears.*—The mouth is the aperture by which food is taken for nourishment. In this are the teeth for breaking and masticating the food, and the tongue, the principal instrument of taste and of speech. The nose is penetrated with apertures or nostrils, by which air is received and communicated to the lungs, and as respiration cannot be interrupted without loss of life, and as the nostrils may casually be obstructed, the creator has provided that air may be inhaled by the mouth, that life may not depend on a single

orifice. The ears, organs of hearing, have a wide aperture for receiving vibrations of air, and conveying sound to the auditory nerve.

54. *The neck and body.*—The neck which connects the head with the body is smaller than the body, and so flexible as to permit the head to be turned. The chest or thorax, the upper part of the body, contains the lungs and heart, organs indispensable to life, which are defended from injury by the ribs and sternum or breast bone.

55. *The arms.*—To the upper part of the body are attached the arms, by a joint at the shoulder. By means of this joint, the arm may be moved in any direction. Near the middle of the arm is the elbow, a joint by means of which the arm may be bent for embracing, holding and carrying things. At the wrist is another joint, for turning the hand. The hand at the extremity of the arm has five fingers, each of which has three joints by means of which they may be bent for grasping objects. As the thumb is intended to encounter the strength of the four fingers on the opposite side of an object, it is made much thicker and is sustained in exertion by a larger and stronger muscle.

56. *The lower limbs.*—The lower limbs are attached to the body by a joint that admits of a forward motion for walking; while the joint at the knee permits the limb to be bent. To the end of the leg is attached the foot which is so broad as to support the body in a steady position. The ankle joint permits the foot to be turned and raised for the convenience of stepping. The firm muscular substance of the heel, and that at the first joint of the great toe, are well fitted to support the body,

or receive its weight in stepping. The motions of the legs are dependent on some of the strongest muscles and tendons in the body. Muscles are firm fleshy substances, and tendons are the cords by which the muscles are attached to the bones.

57. *Bones and skin.*—The frame of the body consists of bones, hard firm substances, which support the softer flesh and viscera. The bones, for enabling animals to move and exert power in various ways, are connected by joints, so fitted as to permit the limbs to move; the round end of one bone being placed in the hollow of another, or otherwise inserted so as to be movable. The flesh is a softer substance, but the muscular part is that which gives active strength and vigor to the limbs. The whole frame is invested with skin, a tough substance, covered with a cuticle. The firmness of the skin defends the flesh from injury, while its extreme sensitiveness serves to give us notice of any external annoyance, and put us on our guard.

58. *Of the viscera and blood.*—The principal viscera are the heart, and lungs, in the thorax or chest, and the liver and bowels in the abdomen. The lungs support life by receiving and expelling air at every breath. The fresh air conveys the living principle to the lungs, and the foul air is expelled. The heart by its motion drives the blood into the arteries, which convey it to every part of the body and limbs, and the veins receive it at the extremities and re-convey it to the heart. By the blood, heat is communicated to all parts of the body.

59. *Intellect and soul.*—Wonderful as is the structure of the animal body, and the adaptation of its parts to support life, still more astonishing is the existence of intellect, a soul and moral faculties, with the matter which composes the body. We can, without much difficulty, conceive of mechanical powers exerted in respiration and the circulation of the blood; but we can have no idea how the powers of understanding, and reasoning can be united with matter which is by itself inert and insensible. There is perhaps no fact in the universe, which, to us, is so utterly inexplicable, and which so forcibly impresses upon our minds the agency of almighty power. The existence of human intellect is by itself absolute demonstration of the being of an infinite God, and of his exclusive agency in our creation.

60. *Seat of the intellect.*—The brain is evidently the seat of the understanding. This is a soft delicate substance, inclosed in the skull, which consists of bones, and defends the brain from injury. From the brain proceeds the spinal marrow, which extends through the back-bone, and from which branches of nerves extend to different parts of the body. The nerves are supposed to be the organs of sensation and perception. Any serious injury or disordered state of the brain destroys the regular exercise of reason, and a separation of the spine is followed by instant death.

Structure of the earth.

61. *Land.*—That part of the earth which is not covered with water consists of a variety of soils,

and contains a variety of mineral substances. Its general division is into hills or mountains and plains. Hills or elevations of moderate size are composed sometimes of sand, clay or other earthy matters, without rocks; but often their base is a body of rocks and stones. But vast masses of rock are usually the bases of mountains; and not unfrequently the whole mass is rock not even covered with earthy matter.

62. *Uses of mountains.*—Mountains are useful or necessary for the purpose of forming slopes and declivities, in land, which are necessary to give currency to water. If the surface of the land were perfectly level, there could be no rivers; and water falling upon the earth must be stagnant, until absorbed or evaporated. Hence we observe that continents or large tracts of land, on which rivers must be of great length, in order to reach the ocean or other reservoir, contain high mountains. The reason is obvious; the sources of long rivers must be in very elevated regions, or there would not be a sufficient declivity or descent, to conduct streams to the sea.

63. *Other uses of mountains.*—The rocks which form the bases of mountains are often useful for various purposes. Such are limestone, slate and granite. They often contain iron, and other valuable metals. They embosom reservoirs of pure water which issues in springs, which are the sources of rivers. Many mountains are covered with earth sufficient for producing forests of trees for fuel and timber. On them also grow medicinal plants for the use of man; and the forest is the habitation of wild beasts whose flesh may feed, or whose fur may warm some part of the human race.

64. *Minerals.*—The earth abounds with mineral substances, which are of immense importance to mankind. Of these the most useful are salt and coal. It is remarkable that in many countries, remote from the ocean, the earth embosoms vast masses of salt, for the supply of the inhabitants. Such is the fact in Poland, whose mines of salt are a wonder. And where salt already crystallized, is not taken from mines, it may be obtained from water saturated with salt, raised from natural reservoirs in the earth, as in Onondago, in the State of New York. This is a benevolent provision of the Creator, for the comfort of men, in places remote from the sea.

65. *Coal.*—The vast beds of coal found in the earth are another proof of divine goodness. Some countries, without this mineral, would not be habitable or at least not populous for a long period of time. Such is the case with England. That country has long since been destitute of wood for fuel, and without coal, not only must many of its manufactures cease, but its population must be reduced. The immense treasures of coal in the United States, such as those in Pennsylvania, are among the most valuable gifts of Providence to mankind.

66. *Metals.*—Among the most useful substances contained in the earth are the metals. Of these iron is the most necessary to mankind ; so necessary indeed that without it men must have remained in a half-barbarous state. To this must be added gold and silver which are the instruments of commerce among all civilized nations. Being scarce, they can never lose their value by superabundance,

being very hard, they are not liable to be worn away, and not being liable to rust, they retain their luster and their substance, a long time, unimpaired. To these may be added lead, tin, copper and zink, all of great value in the arts.

67. *Air and Water.*—It is observable, that God, in his wisdom and benevolence, has created not only what men want, but has created in the greatest abundance, what is most necessary, or essential to their existence. Thus air, which is indispensable to life, invests the whole globe. Wherever men go, they find air for respiration. Next to air the most necessary substance, is water, and this is abundant in most parts of the earth. And the better to preserve the purity of these fluids, provision is made in the economy of the creation, to keep them almost continually in motion.

68. *Winds.*—By the laws of nature, heat expands air and puts it in motion. When air is rarefied, it becomes lighter than in its usual state, and the denser or heavier air rushes to the place where it is rarefied. This is one of the general causes of winds, which blow from land to the ocean or from the ocean to land, according to the state of heat. At certain times, when the earth is heated, cold air rushes from the regions of the clouds, with rain or hail, cooling and refreshing the heated earth. Violent winds frequently agitate the ocean and currents continually carry water from one climate to another.

69. *Water.*—The ocean is the great reservoir of water on the earth; there are also inland seas, lakes and rivers. The water of the ocean is salt, but in evaporation the salt is separated and left

behind, and fresh water only rises in vapor. Wonderful is the process of evaporation and generation of rain. By the heat of the sun or drying winds, water is raised from the ocean and the earth, but in an invisible state, so that the labors of man are not impeded by evaporation. When raised into the cold regions of the atmosphere, the watery particles are condensed into clouds, which cast the water back upon the earth. This interrupts the labors of the husbandman, but for a short time only, and it is remarkable that rain ordinarily falls in small drops, that do no injury even to the most tender plants.

70. *Form of the surface of the earth.*—It is worthy of special notice that the two continents are so formed that both terminate in navigable latitudes. On the north, the continents extend into the polar regions, and if any passage by water exists between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, it is usually or always obstructed by ice. But in the southern hemisphere, Africa on the east and America on the west of the Atlantic, terminate in navigable latitudes. Hence, since the southern termination of the American continent, at Cape Horn, has been discovered, ships are continually passing from Europe and the United States round that Cape and visiting the isles of the vast Pacific on their way to China, and the Indies.

71. *Advantages of this form of the earth.*—Had the two continents been extended from pole to pole, the navigation from one side of the globe to the other would have been prevented. And had the continents extended east and west, the intercourse between the northern and southern climates,

would have been limited, so that the fruits of the cold and temperate regions could not have had a ready exchange for those of the tropical latitudes, and *vice versa*. But in the present positions of the continents and ocean, the navigation between the climates is not interrupted: The sugar, the rice and the oranges of the warm climates are easily conveyed to the frigid zone; while the furs, the fish, the timber and the metals of the north are borne to the equatorial regions. In all this arrangement we cannot but see the purposes of a benevolent creator.

72. *Moral purposes of this form of the earth.*—It is obvious that the Creator adapted all parts of creation to important purposes, moral as well as physical. The form of the continents is fitted to favor commerce, and the free intercourse of nations. This commerce contributes greatly to the convenience of mankind. At the same time, commerce is made the handmaid of civilization, and the instrument of evangelizing pagan nations. In the structure of the globe we have evident proofs that the creator had it in his counsels to provide the means of recalling mankind from their national alienation and wandering from his service into a communion of Christian brethren.

Read the third chapter of Genesis.

73. *Trial of Adam.*—Adam and Eve were originally in a state of innocence, and had every possible motive to remain in that state, in the enjoyment of the favor and protection of God. But God placed them in a state of trial, which was intended

to furnish proof of their obedience. He gave them permission to eat freely of the fruits produced in the garden of Eden, except the fruit of one tree in the midst of the garden. This he forbad them to eat on the pain of death.

74. *Apostasy of Adam and Eve.*—While Adam and Eve were happy in the innocent enjoyment of the bounties and protection of providence, Satan, the grand adversary of mankind, entered the garden in the form of that most subtil animal, the serpent, intending to seduce them from their duty. He began his attempts upon Eve, assuring her that if she should eat of the forbidden fruit, she would not die; on the contrary, she would be greatly enlightened with the knowledge of good and evil. Eve was deceived; she at first hesitated, but seeing the forbidden fruit to be inviting, she yielded to the temptation, ate of the fruit, and gave to Adam, and he ate also.

75. *Consequences of their disobedience.*—No sooner had Adam and Eve eaten of the forbidden fruit, than their eyes were opened, and they saw themselves to be naked. To hide their shame, they made aprons of fig-leaves. In this condition they were alarmed by the approach of their Maker in the garden, and thinking to avoid his presence, they hid themselves among the trees. This was the consequence of guilt; they were conscious that they had disobeyed their Maker and benefactor, and wished to escape from his frowns; but the attempt was vain. God called to Adam and inquired where he was. Adam not being able to avoid his Maker, confessed that he was afraid, because he was naked, and therefore hid himself.

76. *Adam's attempt to excuse himself.*—God then asked Adam how he knew that he was naked, and whether he had eaten of the forbidden fruit; not that God was ignorant of the fact, but to bring Adam to a confession. Adam, to throw the blame from himself upon Eve, replied, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I ate." Here Adam did what sinners practice at this day; he endeavored to justify himself, or at least to apologize for his sin, by casting the blame on another person. But God did not admit, nor will he ever admit, such an excuse.

77. *Conduct of Eve.*—God then addressed Eve, and asked her what she had done. Eve also attempted to excuse herself by casting the blame on the serpent, saying, "The serpent beguiled me, and I ate." But a holy God would not admit such an apology; and proceeded to denounce the punishment of the guilty pair.

78. *Condemnation of Adam and Eve.*—After pronouncing a curse upon the serpent, and condemning that animal forever to creep and eat dust, God uttered sentence against Eve and Adam; condemning the woman to pain and sorrow in producing her offspring, and to be in subjection to her husband; then declaring the ground to be cursed for Adam's sake; that it should produce thorns and thistles; that Adam should eat bread in the sweat of his face, and in sorrow, until he should return to the ground, from which his body was taken.

79. *Reflections.*—In this account we have the origin of sin. The disobedience of Adam and Eve to the positive command of God, constituted the

first transgression committed in the world; and to this sin, and the sins of Adam's posterity, are to be ascribed all the woes and miseries which have afflicted and tormented the human race from the apostasy of Adam and Eve to this day. Adam and Eve found what we all experience, that punishment and misery are inseparably connected with disobedience to God's commands.

80. *Banishment of Adam from Eden.*—Adam by sin had forfeited God's favor and protection, and incurred his displeasure. Being corrupted and defiled by sin, he was no longer a proper resident of Eden; and lest he should partake of the fruit of the Tree of Life, and live forever, God drove him from the garden to till the ground. To prevent his return, cherubim, probaby a guard of angels, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, were placed on the east of Eden, to defend the tree of life. This shows us that God's favor and eternal life are forfeited by sin, and cannot be recovered by man, except by the special mercy of God. This mercy God condescended to vouchsafe to man, in the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. The seed of the woman was the Messiah, or Jesus Christ, who alone opens the way to heaven.

Read the fourth chapter of Genesis.

81. *Cain and Abel.*—In this short history of Cain and Abel, we have an account of the first murder committed by man. Cain was a tiller of the ground, but Abel was a shepherd. In process of time, Cain and Abel brought each his offering

to Jehovah. Cain brought some of the fruits of the ground, and Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock. God received the offering of Abel with favor, but not the offering of Cain. This preference of Abel's offering excited the wrath of Cain, and his countenance fell.

82. *Cain kills Abel.*—The Lord intimated his displeasure at Cain, asking him why he was angry; and telling him that if he performed his duty, he would be accepted; but if not, he was guilty, and must submit to the consequences. But Cain's wrath was not appeased; and while Cain and Abel were in the field, Cain fell upon his brother and slew him. And to this crime he added falsehood; for when God inquired of him where Abel was, he declared that he knew not: for these crimes, Cain was punished. God declared that the ground which had received his brother's blood, should not yield its fruit to Cain; and that he should be a fugitive and vagabond on the earth.

83. *Punishment of Cain.*—Cain was doomed to severe suffering for his crime, and declared "his punishment was greater than he could bear." He was forsaken by God, and declared himself liable to be put to death by any person who should meet him. But God determined that he should live, an enduring monument of his righteous judgment; and therefore set a mark upon him. Under such circumstances of suffering and infamy, Cain departed from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, that is banishment.

84. *Reflections.*—In this interesting story, we are to notice the cause of Cain's enmity to Abel. This was *envy*. Cain could not patiently endure

that his brother's offering should be accepted by God, and his own rejected. This preference filled his heart with malice, and determined him to kill his brother. Instead of humility and a cheerful submission to God's will, his proud heart revolted, and he resolved on revenge. And why was Abel's offering accepted? Doubtless because it was presented in faith and piety; while Cain's was presented merely for form, or as an external ceremony, without pious affections. God regards not form and ceremonies; but the intention, the heart, the affections of his worshipers.

Read the fifth chapter of Genesis.

85. *Long life of the antediluvians.*—In this chapter we have an account of the descendants of Seth, a son of Adam, and of their several ages, which rose to seven, eight, or nine hundred years, and upwards. The oldest man, Methuselah, lived to the age of nine hundred and sixty nine years. But there is one remarkable exception in Enoch, who lived only three hundred and sixty five years, "for God took him." "He was translated, that he should not see death." Heb. xi. The reason assigned was, that "he walked with God." That is, he lived a life of holy obedience to God, and in intimate communion with him, at a time when men in general were very corrupt.

Read the sixth chapter of Genesis.

86. *Wickedness of man.*—In this chapter, we have an account of the universal corruption of

mankind, which led to the destruction of nearly the whole race. It is stated that the sons of God took to themselves wives from among the daughters of men; which is supposed to signify that good men, true worshipers of God, intermarried with the irreligious or idolatrous. The consequence was, general corruption and wickedness. So general was the corruption, that one man only, Noah, the son of Lamech, was found to be a true worshiper of God, and a preacher of righteousness.

87. *Divine determination.*—To such enormity had the general wickedness of men arisen, that God determined that his spirit should no longer strive with them; but that he would destroy them from the face of the earth. The imaginations of their hearts, their thoughts, their purposes, were continually evil, so that no reformation was to be expected. The earth was filled with violence. But Noah was an exception, and he found favor with God, who determined to save him and his family from the general destruction.

88. *Preparations for the deluge.*—In consequence of the wickedness of men, God determined to bring a flood upon the earth that should overwhelm men and all animals in promiscuous destruction. But Noah and his family were to be preserved for re-peopling the earth; and for his preservation, and that of animals, he was directed by God to build an ark or vessel which should float on the water. Noah, in obedience to this command, built an ark, in which he and his family, eight persons, were preserved; with animals, male and female, to furnish the earth with new

races. All other men and animals perished in the flood.

89. *Reflections.*—The flood is the most remarkable and awful event in the natural world, that has ever happened since the creation. What must have been the enormous wickedness of men, that God should move out of the ordinary course of his providential government, and overwhelm the earth with a flood of waters! This event shows the magnitude of the evils that existed, as also the righteous judgment and Almighty power of God. It proves that however long the patience of God may endure, yet his vengeance will come at last. Wickedness will certainly meet with punishment.

Read the ninth chapter of Genesis to verse 17.

90. *The rainbow.*—In the beginning of the ninth chapter of Genesis, we have the command of God to Noah and his sons to replenish the earth with inhabitants, and his grant of all animals to them for food; but with a strict prohibition of murder, and the feeding on blood. God also established a covenant with Noah and his posterity, declaring that men and animals should never again be destroyed by a flood. As a token and memorial of this covenant, God promised to set a bow in the clouds, which, when it appears, should be the sign of God's gracious covenant. This is the rainbow, which is often seen in the clouds, assuring us that the earth will not again be overwhelmed by a flood.

Read the tenth chapter of Genesis.

91. *Descendants of Noah.*—Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. The descendants of Japheth, the eldest son, settled the north of Asia, and all Europe. The descendants of Shem peopled Assyria, Syria and Arabia; and the descendants of Ham peopled Africa.

Read the eleventh chapter of Genesis to verse 9.

92. *Dispersion of mankind.*—As all men descended from Adam and Eve, they originally used one and the same language. The original seat of men after the flood is not precisely ascertained; but they came from the east and established themselves in a plain in the land of Shinar, which lies between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, now Mesopotamia. Here they planned to build a city, and a tower which should reach to heaven that they might make themselves a name, and prevent their dispersion. But God confounded their language so that they could not understand each other, and they ceased from their work and were dispersed over the face of the earth. Hence the city and tower were called *Babel*, that is confusion. This country was the seat of the Chaldeans.

93. *Family of Abram.*—Abram whom God selected to be the father of the faithful, was a descendant from Shem, in the ninth generation. And it is to be noticed that after the flood, the ordinary age of man was shortened, so that in Abram's days, it was not more than two hundred years.

Abram was the son of Terah, and his brothers were Nahor and Haran. Haran died in his native land in the presence of his father Terah, but he left a son, Lot. These all dwelt in Ur of the Chaldees; but Terah took Abram and Sarai his wife, and Lot, and migrated to Haran.

Read the twelfth chapter of Genesis.

94. *Call of Abram.*—While residing in Haran, God commanded Abram to depart from that country, leaving his father's house and kindred, and to take his residence in a land which he should designate. This command was accompanied with a gracious promise, that God would make of Abram's posterity a great nation, which should be blessed and protected, and that in his posterity all the families of the earth should be blessed. In obedience to this command Abram accompanied by his nephew, Lot, removed to the land of Canaan. From Abram descended the Israelites, whom God intended to preserve from idolatry, to be the depositaries of his laws and the true religion, and from whom the Messiah, the redeemer, was to descend.

Read the thirteenth chapter of Genesis.

95. *Abram and Lot.*—While Abram resided in Canaan, a severe famine compelled him to go to Egypt for subsistence. After his return, the flocks and herds of Abram and Lot multiplied to such a degree that contentions arose between their herdmen and they separated. Abram, in this case pursued a prudent course. He said to Lot, "let

there be no contention between us and our herdmen, for we are brethren"—an excellent example for men when at variance. Abram and Lot then separated; Lot removed to the plain of the Jordan, near Sodom, but Abram remained in Canaan. Here God renewed to Abram his promise, that he would give to him and his posterity all the land in that region; then Abram removed and pitched his tent in the plain of Mamre, in Hebron.

96. *Abraham entertains Angels.*—While Abraham dwelt in Mamre, three angels appeared to him, whom Abraham supposed to be men. Abraham, with true hospitality ran to meet them, bowed to them, and invited them to take refreshment. He ordered a calf to be killed, and Sarah hasted to make cakes upon the hearth, and these, when prepared, were set before the guests, with butter and milk, under a tree. What a charming example of genuine kindness, and unostentatious civility is here displayed? The divine messengers then inquired for Sarah, who was in the tent; and they informed Abraham that Sarah should have a son. Sarah overheard this prediction, and laughed, thinking it impossible that she, at her great age, should have a son. But this was fulfilled in the birth of Isaac.

Read the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of Genesis.

97. *Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.*—At this time God revealed to Abraham his purpose to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, on account of the enormities of their wickedness. Abraham interce-

ded for them, hoping that God would spare those cities for the sake of the righteous who might be found in them. And God told him that if *ten* righteous persons could be found in those cities, he would spare them. But that number undoubtedly could not be found; for the Lord rained fire and brimstone upon those cities, and they were destroyed with all their inhabitants. But Lot had been warned to escape, and his life was saved, but his wife looking back was turned into a pillar of salt. This terrible destruction like that by the deluge is another proof of God's detestation of sin.

Read the twenty second chapter of Genesis.

98. *Trial of Abraham's faith.*—The next remarkable fact in the history of Abraham, was the severe trial of his faith. God directed him to take his only son Isaac, whom he loved, and offer him for a burnt offering on a mountain, in the land of Moriah. Abraham, without hesitation, proceeded to obey this command; he saddled his ass, cleft the wood and took Isaac and two young men and went to the place named. On arriving in sight of the place, he left the young men, took the wood, a knife and fire, and went accompanied by Isaac. Isaac, knowing that his father was going to offer a sacrifice, but seeing no victim, inquired of his father, where was the lamb to be sacrificed? Abraham answered, God will provide a lamb for a burnt offering. As Abraham lifted his hand to slay his son, an angel of the Lord arrested his purpose, and immediately Abraham discovered a ram caught

in a thicket, by his horns, which he sacrificed instead of his son.

99. *Abraham's faith.*—This is perhaps the most extraordinary example of entire confidence in God, and complete obedience to his commands recorded of any human being in the scriptures. God accepted it as such, for the angel told him "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld from me thy son, thy only son." And on this occasion Abraham received a renewed promise, that God would bless him and multiply his offspring as the stars of heaven. This unwavering faith of Abraham is an illustrious example for christians of all ages and nations, for God is as well pleased with the faith of men now, and as gracious in rewarding it, as he was in the days of Abraham.

Read the twenty third chapter of Genesis.

100. *Death of Sarah.*—Sarah, the wife of Abraham, died at the age of one hundred and twenty seven years. Abraham, being a stranger in the land applied to the sons of Heth, to grant him ground for a burying place. They very readily complied with his wishes and offered him the choice of their sepulchers without reward. Abraham bowed to them respectfully, and requested from Ephron the cave of Machpelah, for its worth in current money, declining to take it as a gift. An agreement was made between them, and Abraham weighed to Ephron, four hundred shekels of silver for the field, and there he buried Sarah.

In this narrative we notice, first that Abraham, bowed to the children of Heth, in respect and civility, as he had before to the angels, and as men do in this age. Second, that silver was then in use, as the representative of property, but probably not coined, as it was paid by weight.

Read the twenty fourth chapter of Genesis.

101. *Abraham sends to Haran, for a wife for Isaac.*—When Abraham had become old, he desired to have a wife for Isaac, his son. He therefore required his eldest servant to take a solemn oath that he would not procure a wife for him from among the Canaanites, but directed him to go to his kindred in Mesopotamia. The servant obeyed and taking ten camels, departed. Having arrived near the city, he stopped to water his camels, and prayed that when the women should come to draw water, God would direct him to the female whom God had appointed to be his master's wife.

102. *Interview of the servant with Rebekah.*—Before the servant had done speaking, Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah and of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came to the well for water with a pitcher on her shoulder. The servant ran to request a little water to drink, which she cheerfully granted, and then drew water for the camels. The servant was pleased with the obliging conduct of the fair damsel, and immediately produced for her a golden ear-ring and two bracelets for her hands. He then inquired whose daughter she was, and whether there was room in

her father's house to lodge in. She informed him who she was, and told him, there was room for him, and straw and provender for the camels.

103. *Treatment of the servant by Bethuel and Laban.*—The servant, with that piety which distinguished the ancient people of God, gave thanks to the Lord for his kindness to him and his master's house. In the mean time, Rebekah ran and told these things to her mother's family. Immediately Laban, Rebekah's brother, ran to the well, and gave the servant a cordial invitation to the house, where he had water to wash his feet, food for himself and provender for the camels. He then told his errand; and Bethuel and Laban consented that Rebekah should go with the servant, to be the wife of Isaac. Arriving at a certain place, Isaac espied the camels approaching; and Rebekah, being informed that Isaac was coming, alighted from the camel and with becoming modesty put on a vail.

104. *Reflections.*—This narrative presents to us a beautiful sample of the early simplicity of manners in the east. Abraham intrusted to his faithful servant the commission of procuring a wife for his son among his kindred; not willing to form an affinity with the idolatrous Canaanites. The servants met Rebekah at the well with a pitcher on her shoulder, and ready to give him and his camels drink. With what unaffected kindness was he received by the family. "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord," said Laban; "Why standest thou without; for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels." And what gratitude did the servant express to God for this prosperous issue of

his journey! Such examples are worthy of imitation by good men in every age, who should give thanks and praise to God for all their success and prosperity.

Read the twenty fifth chapter of Genesis.

105. *Death of Abraham.*—Abraham gave his property to Isaac and died at the age of a hundred and seventy five years. He left other sons, to whom he gave gifts, and sent them into the east country. Among his sons was Ishmael by Hagar, who has been supposed to be the ancestor of the wandering Arabs or Bedoweens.

Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Esau was a skillful hunter, but Jacob, was more fond of domestic life. On one occasion, Esau returned from the field weary and faint, and requested Jacob to give him some *red* pottage for food. From this circumstance he received the name, Edom, which, in Hebrew, signifies *red.* But Esau, in his distress, thought he might die, and sold to Jacob his birth right for a mess of pottage, a rash act for which, says the apostle, he found no room for repentance, though he sought it earnestly with tears. So men often barter the most valuable blessings for a trifling momentary gratification.

106. *Jacob obtains Isaac's blessing.*—When Isaac became old, his eyes were dim, so that he could not see. In this condition, he requested Esau to go to the field with his bow and procure him some venison for savory meat, that his soul might bless him before his death. Rebekah who was most fond of Jacob, contrived a stratagem for

obtaining Isaac's blessing for her favorite son. As Esau was a hairy man and Jacob was not, she put Esau's garments upon Jacob, and covered his hands with kid-skins. Thus disguised she sent Jacob to Isaac with savory meat which she had prepared, that he might obtain the blessing which Jacob intended for Esau. She succeeded, for Isaac, feeling Jacobs hands to be hairy, was deceived; although he evidently suspected the fraud. He blessed Jacob, and the effect was that, being thus supplanted, Esau hated Jacob, and threatened to kill him. This was the natural effect of the fraud which Rebekah had wickedly devised from partiality to Jacob.

Read the twenty eighth and twenty ninth chapters of Genesis.

107. *Jacobs journey and dream.*—Isaac determined that Jacob should not marry a woman from among the Canaanites, and directed him to go to Padan-Aram, and take a wife from the family of Laban, his mother's brother. Jacob obeyed, and on his journey slept at Luz, with his head upon stones for a pillar. Here he had a remarkable dream of a ladder reaching to heaven, with angels ascending and descending upon it. Above stood the Lord, who addressed Jacob, and made to him a promise of the land on which he slept, and a numerous offspring. He also assured Jacob of his protection. Jacob, awakening said, "Surely the Lord is in this place;" and he called it *Bethel*, that is, the *house of God.*

We observe in this story, another proof of the special favor and protection of God, manifested to his faithful followers, and to the family from which the Savior was to proceed.

108. *Success of Jacob.*—Jacob proceeded to the east, and came to a well where flocks of sheep were usually watered. Here he met with persons who knew Laban, and with his daughter Rachel. Being invited most cordially to take lodgings with Laban, he was pleased with Rachel who was beautiful, and he agreed to serve Laban seven years for his daughter. At the end of the term, he demanded Rachel for his wife; but Laban imposed upon him, and gave him Leah, his eldest daughter who was not so handsome. He remonstrated against such an imposition; but Laban said it must not be that the younger daughter should be given before the elder; however he told Jacob to fulfill another term of seven years, and he should have Rachel. Jacob consented, and thus served fourteen years for his two wives. He continued with Laban six years longer and by his prudence and policy in attending his flocks and herds, he became possessed of a great property in cattle, and then returned to the land of Canaan.

Read the thirty seventh chapter of Genesis.

109. *Joseph's dreams.*—Jacob had twelve sons, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulon, Joseph, and Benjamin. These became the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph was particularly a favorite of his father, who loved him more than his other children,

and made for him a coat of many colors. This partiality of his father, excited the hatred of his other sons against Joseph. The consequences were very injurious. At seventeen years of age, Joseph was with his brethren feeding the flocks, and he dreamed that when he and his brothers were binding sheaves in the field, his sheaf stood up, and the sheaves of his brothers also stood up and made obeisance to his sheaf. This made his brothers hate him the more. He also dreamed that the sun and moon and eleven stars made obeisance to him. Jacob interpreted this to signify that Joseph's father and mother and eleven brothers were to pay him homage; and the brothers envied him.

110. *Fate of Joseph.*—The enmity of Joseph's brethren at last rose to that degree that they determined to rid themselves of him, and some of them proposed to put him to death. But Reuben opposed this act of cruelty, and proposed that they should throw him into a pit. This was done; but there soon appeared a caravan of Ishmaelites going to Egypt with merchandise; and they drew Joseph from the pit and sold him to the merchants for twenty pieces of silver. The merchants carried him to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh. To conceal their wickedness, and deceive Jacob, their father, the sons took Joseph's coat and dipped it in blood and sent it to Jacob, saying "they had found it," and asking him whether he knew it. Yes, Jacob knew the coat, and supposing some rapacious beast had torn Joseph in pieces, he rent his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned many days for his son. His

sons and daughters attempted to console him;—but in vain; his grief was too poignant to admit of comfort; and he said, he would go down into the grave to his son, mourning.

Read the thirty ninth chapter of Genesis.

111. *Character of Joseph.*—In the service of his master, Joseph conducted himself with such wisdom and fidelity, as to secure his confidence; he made Joseph overseer of his house, and intrusted him with the management of all his concerns. In truth God was with him, for he was a good man. When tempted to wickedness by his master's wife, he utterly refused, and said, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God." This question shows that Joseph had as correct views of sin, as any modern christian. He did not ask how the wickedness would affect his reputation in the world, but how he could disobey and offend his maker. He had the same views as David had in another case, who said in his prayer for pardon, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done evil in thy sight." This is the language of true piety in every age.

112. *Joseph imprisoned.*—In consequence of a false accusation by Potiphar's wife, Joseph was cast into prison. But here Joseph by his good conduct, soon gained the confidence of the jailer, who committed to him the care of the other prisoners, and all the concerns of the prison. Joseph was protected and favored by God, who caused all his affairs to prosper. This is an illustrious evidence of the moral government of the world by

God, and of his constant care of those who obey his will and put their trust in him. This is the fact now as much as it was in the days of Joseph. In nothing do men err more from truth and duty, than to attempt to conduct their affairs, in reliance solely on their own wisdom and strength, without seeking the favor and protection of God.

Read the fortieth chapter of Genesis.

113. *Joseph's interpretation of dreams.*—While Joseph was in prison, the king of Egypt's butler and baker offended their prince and he committed them to the prison, in which Joseph was confined; and he had the charge of them. In one night, they both had dreams which troubled them. Joseph observed them to be sad and inquired the cause. They told him that they had dreamed, and there was no person to interpret their dreams. He then requested them to tell their dreams to him, intimating that the interpretation of dreams was from God. Joseph was favored by God and able to interpret the dreams. According to his interpretation, the chief butler was restored to his former office, and the chief baker was hanged. But the butler ungratefully forgot the kindness of Joseph, and he was continued in prison.

Read the forty first chapter of Genesis.

114. *Pharaoh's dreams.*—At the end of two years, Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had dreams that greatly troubled him. He dreamed first, that seven cows, in good flesh, came up out of the riv-

er, and fed in a meadow; and then seven very lean cows came up, and ate the others. He dreamed also that seven full ears of corn came up on one stalk; and afterwards seven thin, blasted ears sprung up and devoured them. The next morning, Pharaoh sent for all the wise men and magicians of Egypt to interpret the dreams; but they were not able. The butler now thought of Joseph, and was sensible of his fault in not attempting to procure his discharge from prison. He told Pharaoh that there was a Hebrew servant in prison who could interpret dreams, and he related to Pharaoh the story of the butler and baker.

115. *Interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams.*—Pharaoh then sent to the prison, and Joseph was brought before him. Pharaoh told him his dreams. Joseph informed him that God had showed by these dreams what he was about to do. The seven good cows and the seven full ears of corn represented seven fruitful years to come; and the seven lean cows and seven thin ears represented seven years of famine which would follow. He then advised Pharaoh to make preparation for this distressing event, by appointing a person to purchase grain, during the years of plenty and lay it up in stores. Pharaoh followed this advice, and appointed Joseph to this office. He made him second to himself only in authority; gave him a ring from his finger, clothed him with fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; at the same time, he gave to him for a wife a daughter of the priest of On.

116. *Grain provided.*—No sooner was Joseph appointed and duly honored, than he visited all

parts of Egypt, collecting grain into store-houses or magazines. The seven years of plenty produduced grain in vast abundance, and by means of the provident care of Joseph, the stores were so well supplied that not only the inhabitants of Egypt, but some people of Canaan, were preserved from perishing, and especially Jacob's family. We see, in these events, the wonderful providence of God, in making the cruel treatment of Joseph by his brethren, the means of saving all his father's family from destruction.

Read the forty second chapt. of Genesis to verse 11.

117. *Jacob sends to Egypt for grain.*—When the famine became severe, the countries about Egypt were compelled to send to Egypt for a supply of bread corn. This was the case with Jacob, who sent ten of his sons to Egypt to buy grain; keeping Benjamin only at home. When Joseph's brothers appeared before him, he knew *them*, but *he* was so much altered that *they* did not know *him*. Being resolved to humble them for the injury they had done him, he spoke roughly to them, asked them whence they came, pretended he did not believe they came to buy food, but were spies who had come to see the nakedness of the land. They assured him in sincerity that they were no spies, but true men, the sons of one man, and that the youngest brother was left at home with their father.

118. *Policy of Joseph.*—Joseph, pretending to prove their veracity, declared to them most positively that they should not leave Egypt, until the

youngest brother should come to him. To constrain them to send for Benjamin, he put them in custody three days. At length he proposed that one of their number should be left in confinement, and that the others might return with grain to their father. They now began to reflect on their cruelty to Joseph, and acknowledged themselves guilty. Joseph heard their conversation, and his heart was moved, so that he turned aside and wept; but he spoke to them by an interpreter, and did not yet reveal himself.

119. Joseph's brethren at last consented to leave one of their number; and Simeon was bound before their eyes, and detained as a hostage, to constrain them to bring Benjamin. Their sacks were then filled with grain, but Joseph would not take their money; this he ordered to be put in their sacks, but without their knowledge. On their return, one of them, opening his sack, at an inn, discovered the money. At this they were alarmed; but proceeding to Canaan, they related the whole story to their father, and requested that Benjamin might be sent to Egypt. At this Jacob was exceedingly grieved, and most feelingly said, "Me ye have bereaved: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not; and ye will take away Benjamin: all these things are against me." Reuben assured his father that he would bring back Benjamin, but Jacob persisted in refusing to let him go, saying, "That if mischief should befall him, then would they bring down his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

Read the forty third chapter of Genesis.

120. *Jacob sends again to Egypt.*—When Jacob and his family had consumed their provisions, they were under the necessity of again resorting to Egypt for grain. The sons however declined going again to Egypt, unless they might take Benjamin with them, as the lord of the land told them not to see his face again, without Benjamin. At length Judah engaged to be surety for the return of Benjamin, and the sons all departed, with the prayers and blessing of their father, and bearing some presents, the fruits of the land. When they arrived in Egypt, Joseph treated them with great kindness, and ordered a dinner to be prepared for them. And now Joseph manifested his filial affection, for when he met his brethren, he inquired most affectionately of their welfare, and that of their father. With what tenderness he asked them concerning their father, "Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spoke? Is he yet alive?"

121. *Meeting of Joseph and Benjamin.*—When Joseph saw Benjamin, he asked, "Is this your younger brother?" He was much affected at the sight of his brother, who was his own mother's son; and unable to repress and conceal his feeling, he retired into his chamber to indulge himself in weeping. After he had recovered himself, he appeared again, and ordered bread to be set before them. And here it is observable that provisions for Joseph, and for his brethren, and for the Egyptians, were set on separate tables, for the reason that Jacob and his sons were shepherds, and their

occupation was held in abhorrence by the Egyptians. It is to be observed also that the brothers were seated according to their birth or ages, and that Benjamin's mess was five times as much as that of the others.

Read the forty fourth chapter of Genesis.

122. *Return of Jacob's sons.*—After dinner, Joseph ordered the sacks to be filled, and the money to be put in the sack's mouth. He also ordered his steward to put his silver cup in Benjamin's sack. The next morning the men departed. Before they had proceeded far from the city, Joseph directed his steward to follow them. He obeyed, and overtaking them, he accused them of taking the silver cup wrongfully. They were astonished, for they did not know the cup was in the sack; and they affirmed themselves to be innocent. They said also that the person with whom the cup should be found, should die; and they all would be bondmen to Joseph.

123. *The cup found.*—A search was made for the cup, and it was found in Benjamin's sack. At this discovery, they were confounded, and loading their beasts, they returned to the city, and threw themselves at the feet of Joseph, admitting themselves to be guilty, and offering to become his servants. But Joseph said, No: he only with whom the cup was found, shall be my servant; the others may return in peace to your father. Judah, who had pledged himself that Benjamin should return, now interceded with Joseph, and relating the whole story, ended by praying that he, Judah,

might be detained, instead of Benjamin, to prevent the sufferings of his father, in case Benjamin should not return.

124. *Joseph makes himself known.*—Joseph had now brought his brothers to a state of deep humiliation; and could no longer refrain from making himself known to them. He then ordered all persons, except his brothers, to leave the room; and with tears in his eyes, said to them, "I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?" They were all struck dumb by this disclosure; and were greatly troubled. Joseph, to alleviate their distress, spoke to them with kindness; inviting them to come near him, and saying, "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves; for God sent me before you to preserve life. Five years are yet to come, in which there will be neither tillage nor harvest. God hath sent me before you to preserve for you a posterity on the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance."

125. *Joseph embraces his brethren.*—Joseph then told his brethren how he had been exalted, and urged them to return to their father in haste, and inform him of his son's prosperity and glory; then convey him to Egypt, where he should be sustained, with all his family. Joseph then fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and they both wept for joy. He then embraced all his brothers successively, and wept with them. After which they entered into a discourse together; and the report of these extraordinary events soon reached the ears of Pharaoh, who was pleased with the intelligence.

126. *Joseph sends for his father.*—Pharaoh now united with Joseph in sending for Jacob and his family; and Pharaoh and Joseph furnished wagons, and provisions, with presents of raiment and money. When Jacob was first informed that Joseph was living, and governor of Egypt, "his heart fainted;" he could not believe the joyful news. But after hearing the message of Joseph, and seeing the wagons sent to convey him and his family to Egypt, his spirit revived, and he said, "It is enough: Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die." We can more easily conceive than describe what must have been the sensations of good old Jacob, when he learned that his beloved son, Joseph, whom he had long supposed to be dead, was not only living, but actually enjoying the highest dignity, next to the king, in Egypt.

Read the forty sixth chapter of Genesis.

127. *Jacob removes to Egypt.*—Jacob now left Beersheba and went to Egypt, with all his family, his cattle and goods, and settled in Goshen, the territory allotted to him by Pharaoh. Here he was met by his son Joseph, who fell on his father's neck and wept a long time. Jacob was so much affected with joy, that he expressed a willingness to die. "Now let me die," said he, "since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive." When Jacob was introduced to Pharaoh, the king asked his age: Jacob informed him that he was one hundred and thirty years old, yet that his days had been few and evil, and he had not reached the age

of his fathers. Jacob then blessed Pharaoh, and left him. As Jacob was a shepherd, and his occupation was odious to the Egyptians, Pharaoh assigned to him and his family a distinct part of Egypt, the land of Goshen, for their residence.

128. *State of Egypt.*—Jacob lived after he settled in Egypt seventeen years. The famine continued during seven years, as Joseph had foretold, and was very distressing. The inhabitants were compelled to part with all their money, and at last sell their lands to Pharaoh to procure provisions. After the famine, Joseph furnished them with seed to sow their land, and reserved one fifth of the produce for Pharaoh. This became the established law of the land.

Read the forty ninth chapter of Genesis.

129. *Jacob's death.*—Jacob had now arrived to the age of one hundred and forty seven years, and the time of his death approaching, he gave his blessing to Joseph, and his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim; repeating to Joseph the promise which God had made to him at Luz, that his posterity should become a great multitude, and should possess the land of Canaan. He then pronounced a blessing on each of his sons, and predictions respecting their future condition; charged them to bury him in the cave of Machpelah, where Abraham and Sarah, Rebekah and Leah, had been buried; and then expired.

Read the fiftieth chapter of Genesis.

130. *Burial of Jacob: Death of Joseph.*—Joseph ordered his physicians to embalm the body of his father, and the Egyptians mourned for Jacob seventy days. Joseph then obtained permission from Pharaoh to go to Canaan for the purpose of burying his father; and he and his family, and a great company of chariots and horsemen, proceeded to Canaan, and deposited the body by those of his ancestors, according to Jacob's directions.

After the death of Jacob, his sons were apprehensive that Joseph would "requite them with evil," for their cruelty in selling him; and sent a message to him, supplicating his forgiveness. They even went and fell on their knees, and offered to become his servants. Joseph was deeply affected, and wept; but he soon quieted their fears, and told them that although *they* thought evil against him, yet *God* meant it for good, for the preservation of the whole family. Being thus tranquillized, they remained in peace.

Joseph, at the age of a hundred and ten years, made his brethren take an oath to carry his bones from Egypt; then died, and was embalmed.

131. *Reflections.*—The story of Joseph is one of the most extraordinary, and most interesting, on record. It shows how wonderfully God brings about the great events of his moral government, not only by punishing the evil passions and wickedness of men, but often by bringing good out of evil. Joseph's brothers intended to remove Jo-

seph forever from their sight; they envied and hated him, because he was the favorite of his father; but God meant that their inhuman and malignant treatment should be the means of preserving their family from destruction. At the same time, in the course of events, the brothers were brought to see the extreme injustice and cruelty of their conduct, and to deep penitence; while Joseph, who had been rejected and sold by his brethren, was protected and favored by God's providence, and raised to the highest honors.

Read the first and second chapters of Exodus.

132. *Condition of the Hebrews in Egypt.*—The posterity of Jacob continued to dwell in Egypt, and in process of time they multiplied so as to constitute a considerable nation, but living as a distinct people. Their increase excited the apprehensions of the king of Egypt, that they would become more powerful than his own people, and might, in war, unite with the enemies of Egypt, and leave the country. To check their multiplication, and keep them in subjection, he placed taskmasters over them, and reduced them to severe bondage; compelling them to make brick and build cities, and even to make brick without straw, for straw was used in mortar, when the bricks were not baked by heat, but dried in the sun. So the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor.

133. *Birth and fate of Moses.*—To check the multiplication of the children of Israel, the king commanded the midwives to destroy all the male

infants as soon as they were born, but not the females. To this order they did not yield obedience. In this state of things Moses was born, and being a goodly child, his mother concealed him three months, that he might not be put to death. When she could no longer conceal him, she made an ark or little vessel of bulrushes, and placed it among the flags, by the river. But a daughter of Pharaoh, the king, discovered it, took the child, and knew it to be one of the Hebrew children. The child cried, and she had compassion on it, and sent for a nurse, who proved to be the child's mother. After the child was weaned, the nurse presented him to Pharaoh's daughter, who adopted him as her son. She called him *Moses*, that is, *drawn out* of the water. Being then educated in the royal family, Moses had an opportunity to obtain all the learning of Egypt, which he could not have done among his brethren, the Israelites.

134. *Moses flees from Egypt.*—When forty years of age, Moses, who was a witness of the oppressions suffered by his people, saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew; and Moses looking about him, and seeing no person in sight, killed the Egyptian. But on the following day, he found that this thing was known, and Pharaoh was seeking to kill Moses. Moses then fled from Egypt, and dwelt in Midian. Having an opportunity to assist the daughters of the priest of Midian, in watering their father's flock, the father invited him to his house, and Moses resided there, and married Zipporah his daughter. This woman was a Cushite, belonging to a tribe of Arabians.

Read the third chapter of Exodus.

135. *Moses called by God to deliver the Israelites.*—Moses was employed as the keeper of the flocks of his father in law, Jethro. Being in the desert near Horeb, one of the cluster of mountains, called Sinai, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire, which appeared to be a burning bush, but the bush was not consumed. Moses turned to see this unusual sight, and God called to him from the bush, and directed him to put off his shoes, for the ground where he stood was holy. He then informed Moses that he was the God of his fathers; that he had seen the affliction of his people in Egypt, and had appeared for their deliverance; saying that he intended to send Moses to conduct them from Egypt to Canaan, a land of great fertility. Moses intimated his weakness and inability to perform this service. But God assured him of his aid, and then revealed himself by his peculiar title, I AM THAT I AM, the self-existent Jehovah, and directed Moses to say to his brethren, "I AM, hath sent me to you."

Read the fourth chapter of Exodus.

136. *Signs to confirm the mission of Moses.*—Moses made objections to undertaking the deliverance of his brethren, but God overruled them, and gave him signs by which his divine mission would be proved. First, a rod which he had in his hand was thrown upon the ground, and it was changed into a serpent, which, when taken by the

tail, was again turned into a rod. Next, he was directed to put his hand in his bosom, and it became leprous; but on being directed to do the same thing again, it was restored to soundness. Moses was told that these signs would convince his brethren of his divine authority to lead them out of Egypt. Moses still objected that he was not eloquent; but God was displeased with his reluctance and intimated to him that his brother Aaron should be his assistant, and both should have instruction from God how to conduct this enterprise.

137. *Moses returns to Egypt.*—Moses now obtained permission from Jethro, to return to Egypt; and he and his wife and sons returned. On his way, in the wilderness, Aaron, by divine direction, met his brother, Moses, and Moses communicated to him what God had commanded him to do. They then went to their brethren and communicated to them the directions of God, and performed the signs before mentioned in their presence. The people believed, and manifested their joy and acquiesence by acts of reverence.

Read the fifth chapter of Exodus.

138. *Moses and Aaron apply to Pharaoh.*—Moses and Aaron, as they had been commanded by God, applied to Pharaoh to let the Israelites depart from Egypt. Pharaoh replied "who is Jehovah, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go! I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go." Instead of granting relief, he increased the burdens of the Israelites, so that they complained of Moses and Aaron, for having, by their petitions

to Pharaoh, been the means of making them more odious, and of increasing their oppressions.

Read the sixth chapter of Exodus, &c.

139. *The first plague.*—God now revealed himself to Moses by his appropriate name JEHOVAH, and promised deliverance to the Israelites. He also promised to bring them to the land of Canaan, and to take them for his peculiar people, and to be their God. Moses and Aaron then appeared before Pharaoh, to petition for the release of their brethren; and Pharaoh required a miracle from Moses and Aaron. This was performed, for Aaron, cast down his rod and it became a serpent in Pharaoh's presence. Then Pharaoh called the sorcerers, and they cast down their rods, which became serpents; but Aaron's rod swallowed the others. Still Pharaoh would not let the people go. But God now proceeded to manifest his power in bringing severe calamities upon Egypt. First by divine direction, Aaron stretched a rod over the waters of Egypt, and they were turned to blood, the fishes in the river died and the water became so foul that it could not be drank.

140. *Other plagues.*—But Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to let the people go. Then other plagues followed—frogs in such numbers as to enter the houses and kneading troughs—then the dust of the earth was turned into lice—then swarms of flies—then a murrain among the cattle destroyed those which belonged to the Egyptians, but not those belonging to the Israelites—then boils and blains upon the Egyptians—then a griev-

ous storm of hail—then swarms of locusts which devoured every green herb—then a darkness of three days, darkness that could be felt—and lastly the death of all the first born among the Egyptians. This last judgment compelled Pharaoh to consent to the departure of the Israelites.

141. *The passover instituted.*—God determining to destroy the first born of the Egyptians, but to preserve the Israelites, directed Moses and Aaron to instruct the children of Israel to take for each family, a lamb, and kill it on the fourteenth day of the month Abib, and sprinkle some of the blood on the side posts and lintel of their doors; that when the destroying angel was executing on the Egyptians, the divine purpose of killing the first born, he might see the blood on the doors of the Israelites, and *pass over* their houses, without injury. This was the origin of the *Passover*, a feast observed by the Israelites to this day. On this occasion, they eat unleavened bread, as a memorial of the haste with which their forefathers ate it, when they departed from Egypt. The practice of keeping the passover by the Jews in all ages to this day, is a convincing proof of the truth of the scriptures.

142. *Departure of the Israelites from Egypt.*—Before the Israelites left Egypt they were directed to borrow or ask from the Egyptians jewels of silver and gold. This was done, and the favor was granted. The Israelites then took their dough and kneading troughs upon their shoulders, and marched from Egypt towards the Red Sea. Their number was six hundred thousand men besides children; and there was with them a mixed multi-

tude, and flocks and herds. This departure or exodus of the Israelites was four hundred and thirty years, after the calling of Abraham to leave his native land. Moses took with him the bones of Joseph, as he had directed. The Israelites were guided by a pillar of a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, manifesting the presence of God.

143. *Destruction of the Egyptians.*—No sooner had the Israelites left Egypt, than Pharaoh was informed of it, and he resolved to pursue them, and for this purpose collected all his forces and chariots. This army overtook the Israelites near the Red Sea, and they were terrified; and began to upbraid Moses for conducting them from Egypt. But Moses directed them to be tranquil, for they would be delivered from the danger. Being commanded by God, Moses lifted his rod over the sea, and the water receded by a strong east wind, and left the bottom dry, so that the Israelites marched over in safety. Pharaoh and his army followed them, but while they were in the channel, the sea returned, and overwhelmed the whole army in one general ruin.

Read the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of Exodus.

144. *Journey of the Israelites—quails and Manna.*—On the occasion of this wonderful deliverance, Moses and the children of Israel sang praises to God, being joined by Miriam, Aaron's sister and other females with timbrels and dances. The Israelites then proceeded towards mount Sinai, but being in want of provision, they murmured against

Moses and Aaron, charging them with leading them into the wilderness to kill them with hunger. To relieve their wants, God caused an abundance of quails to come up, and the camp was covered with them; and in the morning, when the dew was evaporated, the ground was covered with a substance like small round seeds. This they called Manna, and with this species of food were the Israelites supplied, during their journey in the wilderness. This was a special provision for the people of God, in a barren wilderness, where no human means could furnish the necessary food for such a host.

Read the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of Exodus.

145. *Water from a rock.*—Proceeding on their march, the Israelites arrived at Rephidim, where they suffered by thirst, and they murmured against Moses. But Moses cried to God, and God directed him to go forward to Horeb, and strike a rock with his rod. This command was obeyed, and water in abundance gushed out of the rock. At this place the Amalekites attacked the Israelites, but Joshua, their general, defeated them.

At this place also, Moses was visited by his father in law, Jethro, and by his wife and his sons, whom Moses had sent back, to Midian. When Jethro saw and heard what God had done for the Israelites, he blessed God, and acknowledged *Jehovah* to be greater than all gods. Seeing the great labors of Moses in judging the people, he advised him to select persons, *able men, men of*

truth, fearing God and hating covetousness, to act as subordinate judges in small causes. This advice Moses followed, and relieved himself from much of his labor.

Read the nineteenth chapter of Exodus.

146. *Arrival of the Israelites at Sinai.*—The Israelites now moved forward towards Mount Sinai, and encamped near the mount. As God was about to give to them and to the world the moral law, or substance of all rules for the government of mankind, and to accompany this great event with extraordinary displays of his power and glory, he commanded that the people should not approach the mountain, but remain in their encampment. A line was drawn to prevent access, and the people stood at the foot of the mountain. The Lord then descended upon the mount with great majesty, amidst thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud, which filled the Israelites with terror and amazement. God then called Moses to the top of the mountain and communicated to him his will in TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Read the Ten Commandments, from the twentieth chapter of Exodus.

147. *The Ten Commandments.*—The first commandment forbids us to have any other God, before Jehovah. It forbids the worship of any and every other being. The first and highest duty of men is to revernce, worship and obey the only true God. Men are prone to consider

their social duties to their fellow men as the first in importance, and all that are necessary to be observed in order to secure God's favor. This is a pernicious mistake, and probably the ruin of millions of the human race. Supreme love to God, and reverence for his character, and laws, is the first duty of men, and the true source of all other duties. Obedience to God's laws, to be genuine, must spring from love to him; and a conformity to *his character* is that which constitutes excellence in *human character*.

148. *Second commandment.*—The second commandment forbids the making and worshiping of images, statues or any likeness of any created thing in heaven or on the earth. This practice of worshiping images, pictures or other created things is the *idolatry* of heathen nations, which the scriptures pointedly condemn. It was the besetting sin of the Jews, who often relapsed into the worship of the sun, moon and stars, or of other created things; and for this they were often punished with terrible judgments. It is still the sin of a large part of the human race. Men, ignorant of the true God, bow down to stocks and stones and to images of brute animals. We are astonished at such stupidity. But christians are not always free from another species of idolatry. They are often so much devoted to pleasure, to wealth, or to fashion, that they prefer them to the service of God, and are guilty of idolatry.

149. *Third Commandment.*—The third commandment forbids the profane use of God's name, that is, profane swearing. This prohibition extends to the irreverent use of God's name in any

transaction in life. It is a common sin as vulgar as it is wicked, to the shame of civilized and christian people, be it told. It is a mischievous evil, for it offends God, and leads to habitual contempt of his authority. How base and ungrateful must be the person who can revile and abuse a parent, or treat his name and character with contempt! how much more base and wicked must be the man who can treat with contempt the great and good being to whom he owes his life, his faculties, and all his enjoyments, and without whose constant sustaining care, he would instantly sink into the grave!

150. *Fourth Commandment.*—The fourth commandment requires us to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. It enjoins upon us to labor and do all our work in six days; but to rest on the seventh day, for it is the sabbath of Jehovah, the true God; and this is one primary reason assigned, that God, in six days, created the heaven and earth and all that they contain; but that he rested on the seventh day and blessed and hallowed it. After the resurrection of Christ, his followers kept and still keep the *first* day of the week as the sabbath instead of the *seventh*, in commemoration of the resurrection of our Savior. The Jews who do not believe in Christ, still observe the seventh day or saturday. The sabbath is by God's express command, to be observed as holy time, when all unnecessary temporal employments, work, business and amusements, are to cease, and the day is to be consecrated to the worship and service of God. Rest for one day in seven is useful for refreshing man and beast; the sacred observance of

the sabbath as holy time is among the best supports of christianity; and the practice of Christian principles is not only the means of final salvation, but the best means of securing safety and happiness in this life.

151. *Fifth Commandment.*—"Honor thy father and thy mother," is the fifth commandment, and accompanied with the promise of long life. This precept is of great concern in society. Children are, by their creator, made subject to their parents, during infancy and childhood, while they have not knowledge and experience to govern themselves in the best manner; and while they look to their parents for support. As the characters of men are formed in early life, the obedience of children to their parents is not only most important to their own welfare, but also to the peace and good order of society. Ill-governed, rude, refractory children are often the pests of society; they are rough, vicious companions and turbulent citizens. No small part of the vices and disorders of society, personal enmities, quarrels and lawsuits, originate in the wrong or defective government of families. The kind, obedient, modest, well disciplined child makes a friendly companion, a good father or mother, and a peaceable citizen. This command includes doubtless the duty of paying all proper respect to other superiors in age and authority.

152. *Sixth Commandment.*—This command, "Thou shalt not kill," is of great extent in its application. It forbids not only murder, which is a pre-meditated, malicious killing, but all homicide or manslaughter, either by direct or indirect

means, except in pursuance of law, or in necessary self-defense. Life is the gift of God, and no man has a right take it from another; nor has a person a right to destroy his own life. Suicide is self-murder. Nor have we a right to do what we know tends to the destruction of life. On the contrary, we are required to take all suitable means to preserve life and health, that we may be useful to our families, and friends and to society. We have no right to injure ourselves by excess of labor or of indulgence; nor to expose ourselves without necessity to extreme danger.

153. *Seventh Commandment.*—This command not to commit adultery implies a prohibition of all illegal intercourse between the sexes; that is, all carnal commerce, except between persons lawfully married. The sins forbidden in this commandment produce most extensive misery and calamities in society. The peace of families is often destroyed, and thousands and millions of persons, especially females, are doomed to infamy in this life, and to eternal destruction in the life to come. The seducer incurs nearly the same guilt as the murderer; and although the laws of men do not punish the crime with like severity, yet his conscience, if he is not abandoned by God, must harrow up his soul with perpetual remorse.

154. *Eighth Commandment.*—"Thou shall not steal" is a brief commandment; but of most extensive application. Stealing, in law, is the taking from another secretly some of his property, with a felonious intent, or intent to defraud. This a common crime, punishable by the courts of law. But this commandment extends to prohibit every

species of cheating and fraud; every art by which property is gained from another, without his consent, or without a just consideration. It forbids all deception in contracts of bargain and sale: all undue advantage taken of another's ignorance of the value or good condition of property; all withholding from another what is his lawful due; all peculation and embezzlement of property intrusted to one's care; and all robbery and piracy.

155. *Ninth Commandment.*—This command forbids the giving of false testimony. It is especially appropriate to the testimony given by witnesses in courts of law, which should always be strictly according to truth. Witnesses in courts are obliged to take an oath that they will tell the truth and the truth only. But the command extends to prohibit all falsehood in declaration, and also all deceptive actions, that may injure another, by leading him into a snare. Lying and falsehood are mean as well as pernicious vices. The liar may injure others; but he is sure to injure himself. He loses the confidence of those who know him; he is suspected, and shunned. But one of the most detestable characters is the defamer; one who slanders his neighbor. He is a pest in society. He destroys reputation which is as dear to men as life.

156. *Tenth Commandment.*—The tenth commandment forbids the coveting of other men's goods and enjoyments. This vice proceeds from envy, avarice or lust; it implies discontent with the allotments of providence, or with one's own condition; and often leads men to deeds of the foulest injustice. It is our duty to be contented with our lot, and not to repine, at the success, happiness and enjoyments of others.

157. *Reflections.*—These are the *Ten Commandments*, written with the finger of God, on two tables of stone, and delivered to Moses, for the direction of the Israelites. They are the basis of the whole moral law, which is binding upon us and upon the whole world of mankind. A just understanding of them, in all their applications, gives us a knowledge of what God requires of men, as their duties to him, and to their fellow men. Jesus Christ has given a summary of these duties in the following words: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it; "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Math. 22.

Read the twenty third chapter of Exodus to the thirty second verse.

158. *Laws given.*—After the ten commandments were given, Moses proceeded, by divine direction, to communicate to the Israelites a variety of special laws for regulating their conduct. Many of these laws are of general application to mankind, and have been made the basis of the laws in modern christian countries. Besides these, a particular ritual was prescribed for the Jews, with numerous ceremonies and sacrifices, which are supposed to be typical of the great sacrifice of Christ. For the performance of these rites and ceremonies, an order of priests was established, and the tribe of Levi consecrated to that

office. At the head of the priesthood was Aaron, the elder brother of Moses. This ritual law has been abolished by the gospel.

159. *The molten calf.*—Moses continued upon mount Sinai, forty days, and until his absence created disaffection among the people. They thought Moses had forsaken them, and requested Aaron to make for them gods to be their conductors. Accordingly Aaron called for their golden ear-rings and made them into the image of a calf, and said to the people "These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt."

This is a remarkable example of the fickleness and levity of the Jews. They had repeatedly promised to yield obedience to Jehovah, but suddenly they apostatized, and procured a golden calf for their leader; and to this calf they offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings.

160. *Conduct of Moses on this occasion.*—Moses being informed by God of the sin of the Israelites, and commanded to go down from the mount, interceded for the people, that they might not be destroyed. He then took in his hands the two tables of stone, containing the Ten Commandments, and went down and as he approached the camp, his ears were saluted with the shouts of the Israelites who were singing and rejoicing in honor of the calf. This roused his anger and he cast the stones from his hands and they were broken. He then burnt and reduced to powder the golden calf and strewed the dust upon the water and made the people drink it. He then called together those who were on the side of Jehovah, and the sons of Levi assembled, and slew of the revolters about

three thousand men. Thus was the idolatry of the Israelites suppressed.

Read the thirteenth chapter of Numbers.

161. *Spies sent to explore Canaan.*—While the Israelites were at Paran, Moses, by divine command, sent twelve men, one of each tribe, to explore the land of Canaan; to see the quality of the land, and the condition of the inhabitants. These men accordingly proceeded and examined the country, and returned, bearing between two of them, a branch with a cluster of grapes and some figs and pomegranates. They reported that the land was good, "flowing with milk and honey," and presented a sample of its fertility in the cluster of grapes. But they said the inhabitants were strong, among them were giants and their cities were walled up to heaven, and thus they discouraged the Israelites from attempting to conquer the country. But Caleb and Joshua opposed this representation, and encouraged the people to go immediately and take possession of the land. These two men were therefore permitted to enter the land of Canaan, while all who rebelled against God's will by their timidity, were doomed to perish in the wilderness.

Read the sixteenth chapter of Numbers.

162. *Rebellion of Korah, &c.*—While the Israelites were in the Wilderness, Korah, the son of Levi, Dathan, Abiram and On, with two hundred and fifty princes or chief men arose against Mo-

ses and Aaron, and accused them of arrogating to themselves too much power by exalting themselves above the congregation, who, they alledged, were all holy. They manifested the same jealousy of greatness in others, and the same leveling disposition which has characterized people in every age and nation. Moses expostulated with them for not being contented with their station, in serving the tabernacle, and for aspiring to the priesthood. They, on their part, accused Moses of not making good his promise to bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey, but exposing them to perish in the desert. But God punished Korah and his company; for the earth opened and swallowed them up, and all their possessions. A fire also fell upon the two hundred and fifty accomplices and consumed them.

Read the thirty fourth chapter of Deuteronomy.

163. *The Israelites proceed towards Canaan.*—The Israelites were forty years in the wilderness, in which time, Moses, by God's command, gave them laws and instituted rites many of which their descendants observe at this day. This fact is full proof of the truth of the scriptures, respecting that nation. It is to be remarked that in consequence of the rebellious conduct of the Israelites, they were condemned by God to perish in the wilderness, and all the generation died on the way, except Joshua and Caleb, who did not rebel. When the Israelites came into the land of Moab, near the Jordan, Moses recapitulated to them the laws, precepts and instructions he had given them, giving

them his last charge, then ascended mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, surveyed the surrounding country which the Israelites were to possess, and then died, and was buried in a valley in the land of Moab. The Israelites mourned for him thirty days. He was succeeded by Joshua, a distinguished warrior, who headed their armies in the conquest of Canaan.

Read the first and second chapters of Joshua.

164. *Spies sent.*—After the death of Moses, God commanded Joshua to go over the Jordan, promising to him success in conquering Canaan, and enjoining upon him courage and a strict observance of the laws of Moses. Accordingly Joshua directed the people to make provision for subsistence. He then sent two men as spies to explore the land on the west of the Jordan, even Jericho. These men went and took lodgings with Rahab; and the king seeking to take them, they were concealed by her and preserved. She exacted from them a promise, that when the city should be destroyed by the Israelites, she and her father's family should be saved; and then let them down by a cord through a window, for her house was on the wall of the city. The spies returned and told Joshua that the Lord had delivered the land into their hands, for the inhabitants were disheartened at their approach.

Read the third and fourth chapters of Joshua.

165. *The Israelites pass over the Jordan.*—Joshua now gave direction to the people to pre-

pare to pass over the Jordan. The priests were commanded to bear the ark, and go before the multitude, who were to follow at the distance of two thousand cubits. The season for passing the river was the spring, when the river was swelled, and its banks overflowed by the waters from the melting of snow on the mountains of Lebanon. This was in April, which was then the time of harvest, as it is still in that country. When the priests, bearing the ark of the covenant, came to the river, and their feet touched the water, the river parted; and a passage was opened for the Israelites to march over the channel on dry ground. For a memorial of this remarkable event, Joshua directed twelve men to take each a stone from the bottom of the river, and set them up, that their posterity might know the place in after ages. The Israelites kept the passover on the fourteenth day of Abib, and then the *manna* ceased to be given to them.

166. *Destruction of Jericho.*—The Israelites now proceeded to the conquest of the land of Canaan, and in this there occurred some remarkable interpositions of providence. According to divine directions, the Israelites passed round Jericho once a day for six days, the priests bearing the ark, and seven trumpets of ram's horns. On the seventh day, this was repeated seven times, and then the people, as directed, gave a great shout, the walls of the city fell to the ground; and the city was taken, and all that was in it was destroyed, both the people, the cattle and the goods. But Rahab and her family were preserved, as the spies had promised.

167. *Destruction of Ai.*—The city of Ai was taken by stratagem. At first Joshua sent a small army against the city, about three thousand men; and when the men of Ai came out to fight with them, they fled, and some of them were killed. At this ill success, the hearts of the people fainted, and Joshua rent his clothes, fell on his face, and complained to the Lord. But God reproved him for being disheartened; telling him that Israel had sinned by stealing some of the spoil. To detect the thief, a lot was taken; first, of the tribes, and then of the families in each; and at length the criminal was found to be Achan, who had taken a Babylonish garment, a wedge of gold and some silver. For this crime Achan and all his family were put to death, and his property burnt. The wrath of God being appeased, Joshua was commanded to subdue Ai, and for this purpose he placed five thousand men in ambush. When the main army of Joshua was attacked, they retreated, as if they had been defeated, and drew the men of Ai from the city; then the troops rose from the ambush, entered the city, and set it on fire. So the city was destroyed, and the inhabitants slain.

168. *Policy of the Gibeonites. The sun stands still.*—The inhabitants of Canaan were now alarmed for their safety. To prevent being destroyed, the Gibeonites equipped themselves in old and tattered garments, and patched shoes, and presented themselves before Joshua, pretending they had come from a great distance, because of the name of the Lord, and proposed to make a treaty of peace with him. Joshua consented, and made a league with them. In three days, Joshua was informed

of their stratagem, and found the Gibeonites were from the neighborhood. He then took possession of their cities; but as he had made a league with them, he would not destroy them. He therefore made them bondmen, hewers of wood and drawers of water.

Soon after this, the king of Jerusalem, and other kings of the Amorites, combined their forces to resist the Israelites. But the Lord was with them, and the Israelites defeated their armies with great slaughter. It was on this occasion that the sun and moon were arrested, and "hasted not to set about a whole day." This was a most extraordinary interposition of God for the safety of his chosen people.

169. *Reflections.*—Men, at this day, are apt to disbelieve the scriptures, which record miracles, or supernatural events. They suppose it incredible that God should have exerted his power in a miraculous way, in former times, when we see no such miracles in modern times. But we may rationally suppose God always employs the means necessary to accomplish his purposes, whether the means are common or unusual; and it is no more improbable that he should by miracles save Israel, the nation which he intended to be the depositaries of his laws, than that he should make man at first by a direct act of his own power, independent of other means. His ordinary course of proceeding in the natural and moral world is by uniform laws, or his uniform agency in the use of means. But his power is not limited, and he may exert a direct power, without means, in *preserving* and *governing* the world, as he did in *creating* it. In-

deed we may perhaps consider the constant preservation of the world to be by as direct an agency of supernatural power, as the first creation.

170. *Evidence of the truth of the scriptures.*—In the history of the Israelites, we have some striking evidences of the truth of that history, in the geographical accounts of Egypt and Syria or Canaan. The prominent places described in the first books of the Bible, remain in the same state, as when the Israelites were conducted from Egypt. The river Euphrates, the deserts of Syria and Arabia, the Jordan, the Nile or river of Egypt, mount Sinai in Arabia, the mountains of Lebanon, the Red Sea, are all permanent objects, and they remain to this day, as they are represented to have been in the days of Moses. Many names of places have continued to this day unchanged; the produce of the countries is the same, and the time of harvest. We have then, in the permanent laws of nature, and in the permanent rivers, mountains and deserts, as well as in the continuance of Damascus and other cities, demonstrative proof that the scriptures are true, as far as they describe these permanent objects. Then why should we doubt the correctness of the history, in the narrative of miraculous or supernatural events, when related by the same writers; writers whose veracity is proved by present incontestible evidence? When we have proof before our eyes that they have written the truth in one part of their history, we have no reason to question the truth of what they have written in other narratives.

Read the twenty third and twenty fourth chapters of Joshua.

171. *Death of Joshua.*—After the Israelites had subdued many of the nations of Canaan, they enjoyed a long period of peace under the administration of Joshua. When he had become old, and was near his end, he called together the elders, judges and officers, and after recapitulating before them the most remarkable events in their history, he enjoined upon them to adhere strictly to the laws of Moses, and to the worship of Jehovah. He admonished them to put away the gods which their fathers had served on the other side of the flood, [the river Euphrates,] and to serve Jehovah. He assured them that obedience and the service of the true God would bring them prosperity; and apostasy would bring upon them various calamities. But whatever might be their determination, he resolved that he and his house would serve Jehovah.

Joshua then died, at the age of a hundred and ten years, and was buried on mount Ephraim. The bones of Joseph, which the Israelites had brought from Egypt they buried in Shechem.

172. *Events that followed the death of Joshua.*—The scriptures inform us that Israel served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, and who had known or been witnesses of the works which the Lord had performed in favor of his people. After that, the Israelites forsook the God who had thus far been their guide and protector, and relapsed into

idolatry. They adopted the gods of the pagan nations around them, and bowed down to stocks and stones. The consequence was, God forsook them, and suffered them frequently to be harassed and plundered by their enemies. Having no settled form of government, no king, and no regular mode of appointing or choosing a chief magistrate, they depended on *judges* or distinguished men, who were occasionally raised up by providence for their deliverance. In this condition the Israelites continued about four hundred and fifty years. Acts 13 : 20.

Among the judges was Samson, a man of extraordinary strength, who tore in pieces a young lion; who slew a thousand Philistines with the jaw bone of an ass; and who, when his enemies were collected on a house to see him make sport, pulled down the pillars, and the house fell and buried three thousand men and women in its ruins.

I. *Samuel, chapters* 1—5.

173. *Birth and character of Samuel.*—The last and one of the most distinguished of the judges, was Samuel, the prophet. This man was the son of Elkanah, by his wife Hannah, and a child granted to her prayers. This man, when young, ministered to the Lord before Eli, the priest; and on one occasion, being asleep, God called to him by name. Samuel answered and ran to Eli, supposing he had called him, but being informed he had not, he again lay down to sleep. This was repeated three times, before Eli discovered the truth, that God had called Samuel. At length Samuel

answered the Lord, and was informed that the Lord intended to execute vengeance on two sons of Eli, who were very wicked. This threat was soon executed, for the two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain by the Philistines, who attacked the Israelites and took the ark of the covenant from their camp. Eli, though a good man himself, had not been faithful to restrain his sons from their evil practices, and they became very vile. When Eli was informed of their death, he fell backward from his seat, his neck was broke, and he died.

I. *Samuel, chapter* 8.

174.—*The Israelites request a king.*—Samuel judged Israel all his days; but in his old age, his sons, who were judges in Beer-sheba, were guilty of mal-administration in taking bribes and perverting judgment. The people were now weary of a wicked and unsettled government; and the elders of Israel assembled and came to Samuel in Ramah, and represented to him that his sons "walked not in his ways;" that is, their administration was corrupt: they therefore desired Samuel "to make them a king to judge them like all the nations." On this occasion, Samuel was displeased, but with the spirit of true piety, had recourse to the Lord by prayer; an excellent example for all good men in doubts and difficulties. The Lord said to him, "The people have not rejected *thee*, but they have rejected *me*, that I should not rule over them." Samuel was directed, however, to hearken to them; yet to protest against their design, and to show them how a king would treat them.

175. *Samuel's prediction.*—Samuel, as God had directed, told the Israelites how a king would conduct himself towards them; that he would take their sons for his service, for horsemen, for chariots and for footmen; for captains of thousands and of fifties; for laborers to till his ground, to reap his harvest, and to make instruments of war and other utensils; that he would take their daughters for cooks, confectioneries and bakers; that he would take their fields, vineyards and olive-yards for his servants, and the tenth of their seed and vineyards for his officers and servants, and take their servants and beasts for his work. He added, they would murmur and complain of such oppression. But this representation did not satisfy them; they still insisted on having a king, like other nations, to judge them, and to lead their armies. And God directed Samuel to comply with their wishes.

I. *Samuel, chapter* 9.

176. *Saul anointed king.*—The person designated by God to be the first king of Israel was Saul, the son of Kish, a man of wealth. This man was sent by his father to seek some beasts which had strayed and were lost. When seeking for them, Saul inquired for a seer, to inform him where he should find the beasts, and he was directed by some maidens to Samuel. On meeting Saul, Samuel was informed by God that this was the man destined to reign over Israel. Samuel announced to Saul the purpose of God, telling him to look no further for the beasts, as they had been found. Saul was surprised that he, a Benjamin-

ite, and from one of the smallest families of the smallest tribes of Israel should be selected for such an office. But Samuel entertained him with hospitality, and the next day he anointed him to be king.

177. *David anointed king.*—During Saul's reign there was almost constant war against the Philistines. But Saul offended God, particularly in saving alive Agag, the king of the Amalekites. He therefore commanded Samuel to go to Bethlehem and anoint a king from among the sons of Jesse. When he arrived, Jesse presented to Samuel seven of his sons, but Samuel said God had not chosen any of them; and he asked Jesse if these were all the children he had. Jesse told him, he had one son more, the youngest, who was tending sheep. Immediately he was sent for, and he came. This was David, a youth of a "beautiful countenance, and good appearance," whom Samuel anointed to be king in the presence of his brethren. The spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.

I. *Samuel, chapter* 17.

178. *David kills Goliath.*——On an occasion when an evil spirit from the Lord troubled Saul, David was sent for to amuse him with instrumental music, for David was a remarkably skillful player on the harp. This had the effect to refresh Saul; the evil spirit departed from him, and David found favor in his sight.

Soon after these things, the Philistines made war upon the Israelites, and the two armies were

encamped on two hills opposite to each other. In this situation, Goliath, a giant in stature, presented himself to the Israelites, challenging any one to fight with him. David accepted the challenge, and against the advice of Saul, he met Goliath, armed only with a staff and a sling, and five smooth stones from a brook. When Goliath saw him, he affected to despise him. "Am I a dog," said he, "that thou comest to me with staffs? Come, I will give thy flesh to the fowls and the beasts." David replied, "Thou comest to me with a sword, with a spear and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." He then with the sling hurled a stone, which sunk into Goliath's forehead, and he fell. David then took the giant's sword and cut off his head.

I. *Samuel, chapter* 18.

179. *Causes of Saul's hatred of David.*—David's music, and more especially his victory over Goliath, had commended David to Saul's favor; and Jonathan, Saul's son, became very strongly attached to him. But when David returned from killing the giant, the females came forth to meet Saul with songs and dances, and musical instruments. And as they played they said, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." This greater praise bestowed on David than on Saul, excited Saul's jealousy; and he said, "What can he have more but the kingdom?" The next day, when David was playing on his harp, as usual, an evil spirit came upon Saul, and he threw a jave-

lin at David, intending to kill him. But David was so prudent and popular that Saul was obliged to treat him with respect, and he appointed him to the command of a thousand men. He also gave him Michal, his daughter for a wife. But still he hated him.

I. *Samuel, chapters* 19—24.

180. *Saul seeks to kill David.*—Saul's jealousy and hatred of David continued to rankle in his breast, and he gave orders to Jonathan and the servants to kill him. Jonathan attempted to appease his father's hatred, but without any permanent effect; for Saul again attempted to kill him with a javelin, which missed David and struck the wall. David fled, and to prevent being taken, his wife Michal let him down through a window, and he escaped. To deceive Saul's messengers, Michal placed an image on a bed, with a pillow of goat's hair and covered it with a cloth; and when the messengers came, she told them David was sick. David went to Ramah to join Samuel, and thence to Naioth. By means of stratagem and with Jonathan's assistance, David escaped several times from Saul who pursued him with inveterate malice.

181. *David cuts off Saul's skirt.*—David, to conceal himself from Saul, took refuge in a cave at En-gedi. But his retreat was discovered, and Saul, being informed of it, took three thousand men, and went to find him. It so happened that Saul entered the cave, while David and his men lay in the sides, and were not discovered by Saul.

Here David might have dispatched his enemy with ease and certainty; but he would not raise his hand against the "Lord's anointed;" he therefore only cut off the skirt of Saul's robe; and even this act gave him some uneasiness. But when Saul had left the cave, David followed and called to him, and bowed to him respectfully, as his lord the king, then remonstrated against his ill-treatment, and listening to the calumnies of his adversaries. Then to prove himself no enemy of Saul he told him that he had not killed him, when in his power and showed him the skirt. Saul, affected by this noble conduct of David, spoke kindly to him, called him his son; *then* wept, and acknowledged that David had been more righteous than himself, in returning good for evil. Saul said also that he knew David would be king, and made him take an oath not to extirpate his family.

I. *Samuel, chapter* 26.

182. *Death of Samuel—Davids loyalty.*—Samuel, the eminent prophet, died and was buried in Ramah, and all Israel lamented his death.

David was still obliged to keep himself concealed from Saul. When he was on a hill of Hachilah, certain Ziphites informed Saul where he was, and Saul with three thousand men, went in search of him. David sent spies to ascertain whether Saul had come, and being informed, he went to the camp with Abishai, at night, where he found Saul asleep in a trench, with his spear stuck in the ground, at his bolster—Abishai requested that he might kill him; but David said, no, for "who can

stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless." This is another instance of noble loyalty and generosity in David. But David took the spear of Saul and a cruse of water, and departed.

I. *Samuel, chapters* 26—31.

183. *David reproves Abner—Saul's death.*—When David took the spear from Saul, Abner, his general, lay near him. David, after he left the camp, went to a hill and calling to Abner, accused him of neglect of duty in not defending his king, Saul knew David's voice and again relented; called David his son, acknowledged he had done wrong, and promised to do him no harm. Here his pursuit of David ceased. David now went to Gath and assisted the king, Achish, against his enemies. But the Philistines being doubtful of his fidelity, dismissed him, and he came to Ziklag. Finding that the Amalekites had invaded the city and taken his wives prisoners, he pursued them and recovered the captives.

About this time Saul was attacked by the Philistines, and in battle he was wounded and three sons of his were slain, among whom was Jonathan. Saul now told his armor-bearer to kill him, but he refused; Saul then fell upon his own sword and died.

II. *Samuel, chapters* 1—5.

184. *David's lamentation for Saul.*—Soon after Saul and Jonathan had fallen, David was inform-

ed of the event by an Amalekite, who pretended he had slain Saul, expecting probably that David would be gratified with the intelligence. But David commanded him to be put to death, and then uttered a most affectionate lamentation on account of the death of Saul and Jonathan. II. Samuel, 1, 17—27.

David now by God's command went to Hebron, and there the men of Judah anointed him king. But Abner supported the house of Saul, and made Ish-bosheth, Sauls' son, King over Israel. The consequence was a long war between the adherents of the two parties, the house of Saul and the house of David. At length David prevailed and was anointed king over all Israel.

185. *David's prosperity and victories.*—David being now acknowledged king of all Israel, proceeded to extend the conquests of Israel and entirely subdue the Canaanites. He took the strong hold of Zion from the Jebusites; repeatedly overthrew armies of the Philistines; conveyed the ark of God from Kirjath-jearim to Zion and placed it in a tent; subdued the Israelites, Moabites and Syrians; placed garrisons in Syria of Damascus and in Edom; dedicated the spoils to the Lord; and administered the government with justice. But he committed a great sin in taking the wife of Uriah, and causing her husband to be slain in battle. On this occasion Nathan, the prophet was sent by God to reprove David. This he did and brought him to penitence by a parable, in which a rich man is represented as taking from a poor man his only lamb to dress it for his table, when he had numerous flocks of his own. This gave oc-

casion to David to write the fifty first psalm, in which the feelings of a true penitent pleading for pardon, are expressed with inimitable force and beauty.

II. *Samuel, chapters* 15—18.

186. *Conspiracy of Absalom.*—But David's son Absalom aspired to the throne, and for the purpose of obtaining it, courted the people. His practice was to stand near the gate and as people entered, he took them by the hand, professed great friendship for them, and declared that if he was judge in the land, he would do them justice. By this practice he stole the hearts of the people. With his father's permission, he went to Hebron, as he pretended, to pay a vow, but really to collect a force for taking the kingdom from his father. David hearing of Absalom's conspiracy, left the city and passed over the Jordan. Absalom pursued him, and their forces had a battle; but David commanded his general Joab to deal gently with Absalom. In this battle, the adherents of Absalom were defeated, and Absalom, riding on a mule, under an oak, his hair caught among the branches, and the mule passing on, left him hanging by his hair. Joab hearing this took three darts and thrust them into Absalom's heart, and he died. King David was deeply affected at his son's death, and said "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! O that I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

187. *Final triumph of David.*—The revolt of Absalom was quelled; but one Sheba raised another insurrection. This was terminated by a wise

woman of Abel, a city where Sheba had collected his forces; for when Joab approached to attack the city, she persuaded the inhabitants to cut off Sheba's head, and she threw it over the wall to Joab. After this, David had four battles with the Philistines and defeated them. Having thus subdued all his enemies, David had rest and peace; and he composed a song of thanksgiving to God, in sublime strains, which is recorded, II. Samuel 22. and Psalm 18.

II. *Samuel, chapter* 24.

188. *David numbers the Israelites.*—David in his prosperity and pride, took a step which offended God and brought great calamity on the nation. This was, by giving orders to Joab, his general, to number the people. Joab remonstrated against this measure; but the king persisted, and Joab and his officers numbered the people, and found that there were in Israel, eight hundred thousand men fit for war and in Judah five hundred thousand. But he was informed by Gad, the prophet that he had sinned, and he might choose one of three evils for his punishment—seven years of famine, defeat by his enemies three months, or three days pestilence. David, in a great strait, preferred to fall into the hand of the Lord, rather than into the hands of men, and the pestilence swept away seventy thousand men. David confessed the sin, and the plague was stayed.

This is another instance of the punishment which God inflicts on the pride and arrogance of men, and of the mercy of God towards those who really repent and become humble.

I. *Kings, chapters* 1, 2.

189. *Solomon made king.*—When David had become old, his son Adonijah attempted to usurp the kingly power, and Joab, David's principal military officer, joined him. But David had determined that Solomon should succeed him, and by his order Zadok anointed him, and he was proclaimed King with great rejoicings. Adonijah hearing this news, fled and laid hold on the horns of the altar as a place of refuge. But on application to Solomon, he was pardoned for his usurpation, upon condition that he would be a loyal and good subject. He however committed an error in asking Abishag for a wife and by Solomon's order, he was put to death. Joab also hearing of Solomon's appointment to the throne, fled to the altar, where by Solomon's order he was slain, and thus was opposition to Solomon, quelled, and he was left to enjoy his throne in peace.

190. *Death and character of David.*—After Solomon was anointed King, David died, after a reign of forty years; seven years in Hebron and thirty three in Jerusalem. Before his death he charged Solomon to conduct himself as a man, that is with bravery and dignity; to observe the laws of Moses, and to keep the statutes and commandments of God; as this course of conduct would secure prosperity. He is called in the scriptures the "sweet psalmist of Israel." He was a brave warrior, and a skilful musician. He was distinguished for his piety and although he fell into great sins, yet his penitence was sincere, and he is call-

ed the man after God's own heart. To David chiefly are we indebted for the *psalms* in scripture those devotional compositions, which proceeded from a heart glowing with piety and love to God, and which will warm the hearts of devout christians, while the world endures. Among the last words of David were the following, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." II. Sam. xxiii. It is the neglect of this divine precept, that is, the wickedness of rulers, and the depravity of men who elect wicked rulers, which in every age, have filled the world with violence, and which have brought, and still bring war, oppression and misery upon the human race. And such will forever be the case; if men will not regard the commands of God; if they will not consider piety, religion or moral worth as indispensable qualifications in rulers, they must be harrassed, defrauded and oppressed; this is the reward of their own disobedience and folly.

I. *Kings, chapter* 3.

191. *Wisdom and piety of Solomon.*—Soon after Solomon was seated on the throne, the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and required that he should ask from God what he desired. Solomon in reply, acknowledged his own weakness, saying, "I am a little child," and that he was called to rule a great nation. He therefore prayed God to give him an "understanding heart," that he might discern between good and evil. This request was acceptable to God, who told him that as he had not asked for a long life, nor for riches, nor the

life of his enemies, he should have "a wise and understanding heart." And this promise was fulfilled; for Solomon was distinguished for wisdom, above all other men. His proverbs comprise the substance of all moral and social duties.

I. *Kings, chapter* 5 *and sequel.*

192. *Solomon builds a temple.*—David during his life had proposed to build a temple to Jehovah, and actually made some provision for the work. But he was admonished by God not to proceed, but to leave the work to be executed by his son. 2 Sam. vii. Solomon prosecuted the design, and applied to Hiram, King of Tyre, for timber, which was obtained; then Solomon erected a splendid temple, and dedicated it to the service of God. When the building was finished, he directed the ark to be brought from the city of David, or Zion and placed in the most holy place. He then in presence of the elders and heads of the tribes kneeled before the altar and made a devout prayer to God for his blessing on the place, and supplicated forgiveness for the Israelites, who, when they should commit sin, should repent and pray towards the temple. He then closed the ceremonies with a feast and sacrifices, and dismissed the people, rejoicing for all the goodness of God to David and to Israel. 1. Kings, viii. 2. Chron. vi.

I. *Kings, chapters* 9, 10 and 11.

193. *Solomon's wealth and apostasy.*—After Solomon had finished the temple and houses for

his own accommodation, he built or repaired certain cities, and among others Tadmor, in the wilderness, which is believed to have been Palmyra, the ruins of which at this day prove it to have been a most magnificent city. Solomon also carried on a trade to Ophir, from Ezion-geber, a port on the Elanitic gulf, a branch of the Red Sea. There he built ships, and to navigate them, obtained seamen from Hiram, King of Tyre. In these Solomon imported gold; and so rich was Judea, in his reign, that silver was accounted of little value. Solomon's fame brought to visit him the Queen of Sheba, or Queen of the South, that is Ethiopia or the southern part of Arabia. She was astonished at his wealth and the splendor of his house and furniture, and declared the half had not been told her.

But Solomon's prosperity seduced him from his duty to God; he took a multitude of foreign women for his wives, and they led him into idolatry. This offended God, who declared to him that in consequence of his apostasy, the kingdom should be rent from his family, except one tribe, and this threat was executed.

I. *Kings*, *chapter* 12.

194. *Division of the kingdom.*—After a reign of forty years, Solomon died and was succeeded by his son Rehoboam, who went to Shechem where the Israelites had assembled to make him King. Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had been a servant of Solomon, but who had been informed by the prophet Ahijah, that the kingdom of Israel,

would be rent, and that he should be king over ten tribes, had fled to Egypt to avoid Solomon, who sought to kill him. No sooner was he informed that Solomon was dead, than he returned and the Israelites, being collected, they applied to Rehoboam to know if he would impose on them a yoke or burdens less grievous than his father had done. Rehoboam requested three days to consider the subject, and in that time, he took counsel, first of old men who, with true wisdom, advised him to govern with humanity and moderation, in which case his subjects would be faithful and contented. He then consulted young men, his companions, and they advised him to govern with more rigor than his father. He answered Jeroboam and the people according to this advice. "My Father," said he, "chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions."

195. *Revolt of ten tribes.*—The people on hearing Rehoboam's answer, said to him, "What portion have we in David—to your tents, O Israel." Ten tribes revolted from Rehoboam, and stoned Adoram, the officer who received the tribute. They then made Jeroboam King. Rehoboam in Jerusalem reigned over Judah and Benjamin, and collected an army of one hundred and eighty thousand men to recover the kingdom. But Shemaiah, the prophet, by God's direction, dissuaded him from the contest. Then Jeroboam took his residence on Mount Ephraim, and to prevent his followers from going to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord, supposing they might desert his cause, he made two idols, calves of gold, set one in Bethel and the other in Dan, and made priests of the low-

est of the people, not sons of Levi; and thus made Israel to sin by renouncing the worship of the true God.

Thus the Israelites were divided into two kingdoms, that of Judah and Benjamin under Rehoboam, and that of Israel under Jeroboam. Thus they remained, till the ten tribes were carried captive into Assyria by Shalmaneser.

196. *Reflection.*—In the history of the Israelites, we find important truths, which ought not to pass unnoticed. Under David an able, upright pious prince, the enemies of Israel were all subdued, and that prince left to his son a kingdom in peace. Solomon, by his wisdom and good policy raised the state of Israel to the highest degree of prosperity; and God promised him that if he would adhere to his statutes, the prosperity of his kingdom should be permanent, and the government should remain in his family. But he sinned and offended God, and his kingdom, after his death was rent asunder. We see also in the conduct of Rehoboam the folly of disregarding the counsels of elderly men, who had grown wise by experience and a knowledge of mankind, and trusting to the advice of young men, who are often rash, inexperienced and headstrong.

197. *Condition of the Israelites.*—The division of the Israelites into two kingdoms was followed by numerous wars between them, and innumerable calamities. Most of the kings in both kingdoms were very wicked; the people often relapsed into idolatry, the worship of the true God was neglected, and they were often afflicted with famine, or distressed by the invasions of enemies. Some of

the kings were good men and they attempted to destroy idolatry; but only with temporary success. Eminent prophets were divinely authorized to preach and remonstrate against the sins of the kings and people; but so long and so wholly had the Israelites neglected the national worship, in the days of Josiah, that not only the king, but elderly men had lost all knowledge of the laws of Moses. By accident, in repairing the temple in the reign of the good Josiah, a copy of the Book of the Law was found, and by means of this, Josiah was enabled to revive the national worship.

This example shows the vast importance of observing the sabbath and religious ordinances, as the means of preventing a general corruption of manners. Without these observances, a nation will inevitably be overwhelmed with vices and crimes.

I. *Kings*, *chapters* 17, 18.

198. *Elijah, the prophet.*—In the reign of the wicked Ahab, king of Israel, lived Elijah, an eminent prophet, who foretold a drouth of three years. To secure his safety, he was directed by God to withdraw to a place near the Jordan, where he was fed by bread and flesh brought to him by ravens. He was afterwards directed to go to Zarefath, where he was sustained by a widow, who had only a handful of meal and a cruse of oil; but these were not wasted or diminished by use, being miraculously supplied. While Elijah lived with this woman, her son sickened and died; but he was raised to life, in answer to Elijah's prayer. There

was a severe famine in Samaria, the seat of Ahab's kingdom, by reason of the drouth, and Elijah was sent to Ahab to reprove him for his idolatry, which had brought great distress upon the land. He was the only prophet of the true God, while the prophets of Baal were four hundred and fifty. Elijah assembled the people and said to them "How long halt ye between two opinions? If Jehovah is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." To prove the prophets of Baal to be impostors, he ordered two bullocks, one for himself and the other for the false prophets to be killed and laid upon an altar. He then told them to call upon their god, to burn their bullock. They did so, but received no answer. He then told them to call louder, for perhaps their god was on a journey or asleep. They did so, and cut their flesh, but no answer came. Elijah, having made preparation, then prayed to Jehovah, and fire fell and consumed the sacrifice. This convinced the people and they acknowledged Jehovah to be God. They then by Elijah's direction, slew the prophets of Baal. This event was soon followed by a plentiful rain.

I. *Kings, chapter* 19.

199. *Jezebel's anger—Elisha joins Elijah.*—Elijah, by slaying the prophets of Baal, had excited the wrath of Jezebel, Ahab's wife, one of the most abandoned women that ever lived; and she determined to take his life. She informed him of her purpose by a messenger. Elijah then fled, and took refuge in a cave at Horeb, weary of his life and praying to be relieved by death. He was

indeed in a miserable plight, being the only good prophet, and incessantly persecuted. But God directed him to go towards Damascus, and there anoint Hazael to be king of Syria, and Jehu to be king of Israel, and Elisha, to be prophet in the place of himself. He was told also that there were in Israel seven thousand persons who had not bowed the knee to Baal—being all that were not guilty of idolatry. On his way he found Elisha, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and on him he cast his mantle. Then Elisha followed and ministered to him. Elijah was faithful in the service of God, reproving Ahab and Jezebel for their abominable wickedness.

II. *Kings, chapter* 2.

200. *Elijah taken up to heaven—Children insult Elisha.*—In going from Gilgal, Elijah requested Elisha to remain where he was, for he himself was sent by God to Bethel; but Elisha refused to be left. The request was repeated, but again rejected. When they came to the Jordan, Elijah folded his mantle, struck the water, and the river divided, opening a passage, and both passed over. Elijah then told Elisha to ask what he should do for him, before they were parted. Elisha said, "Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." This was a hard thing, but Elijah told him, if he should see him, when taken from him, he, Elisha, would have his desire. And as they walked forward, conversing together, a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared, and Elijah was parted from Elisha, and carried by a whirlwind into heaven.

Elisha cried out, "My father, my father, the chariot and horsemen of Israel!" He was deeply grieved and rent his garment; he then took up Elijah's mantle, struck the waters of the Jordan, which parted and he passed over and went to Jericho. Then on his way to Bethel, children came out of the city and insulted him; saying, "Go up, thou bald-head." He turned and upbraided them, when two she-bears came out of the wood and destroyed forty two of those children. This judgment shows the dipleasure of God towards children who insult the aged. Reverence for the hoary head is a duty which the young cannot be excused for neglecting; and it is a virtue that always renders them amiable.

II. *Kings, chapters* 4, 5, 7.

201. *Elisha's Miracles.*—Elisha was an eminent prophet, and performed miracles. On one occasion he enabled a widow of one of the prophets to discharge a debt, by supplying an abundance of oil, by which he prevented her sons from being taken for bond-men to pay the debt. He raised from death the son of a Shunamite woman who entertained him. He purified deadly pottage by casting into it a portion of meal. He directed Naaman, general of a Syrian army, to wash in the Jordan for the leprosy. Naaman was angry, that he should be sent to the Jordan for this purpose, thinking the rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel. But Naaman followed Elisha's direction, and was healed. Naaman offered him gifts which Elisha declined to receive; but his ser-

vant Gehazi took two talents of silver and two changes of raiment; and for this deed was punished by being seized with the leprosy. In a severe famine in Samaria, when besieged, Elisha promised great plenty the next day; and this proved to be the fact, for the besieging army of the Syrians were seized with a panic, and left the camp with their provisions, which supplied the Israelites. This prophet died in the reign of Joash, king of Israel.

II. *Kings, chapter* 17.

202. *Captivity of the ten tribes.*—In the long period from Solomon to Hoshea, most of the kings of Israel were apostates from the true religion, and extremely wicked. In the reign of Hoshea, Shalmanezer, king of Assyria, invaded the land of Israel, and Hoshea submitted to pay him tribute. But Shalmanezar discovered that he was contriving to throw off the yoke, by uniting himself with So, the king of Egypt, and he first imprisoned Hoshea; then came with an army, besieged Samaria for three years, and took it, and led the inhabitants captive, placing them in the cities of Assyria and the Medes; and sending people from Assyria to inhabit Samaria. Thus were ten tribes of Israel removed from their country, to which they never returned. This was the judgment of God against a large portion of that nation which Jehovah had chosen for his people, whom he had wonderfuly preserved and protected, and to whom he gave a code of laws, more excellent than any other nation possessed.

II. *Kings*, *chapter* 18.

203. *Hezekiah's reign.*—The tribe of Judah still held possession of their country, after the captivity of Israel; and their kingdom was blessed with the government of two good princes, Hezekiah and Josiah. Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, who was a very bad king, set himself to extirpate idolatry, and restore the worship of the true God. In this he was prospered. But Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invaded the country, and levied heavy contributions upon Judah. He sent messengers also to entice the people to revolt. Hezekiah, in this crisis, applied to Isaiah the prophet, who assured him that Sennacherib should be destroyed. He also supplicated the protection of God; and God sent an angel, and destroyed the Assyrian army, a hundred and eighty-five thousand men. Sennacherib then returned to Nineveh, where he was slain by his sons.

After these things Hezekiah was sick and near to die; but he prayed earnestly to God, who restored him to health, and added fifteen years to his life. On this occasion, a sign was given that his health would be restored: this was, that the shadow on the dial of Ahaz went back ten degrees. This was done at the prayer of Isaiah.

II. *Kings*, *chapters* 21, 22.

204. *Josiah's reign.*—Hezekiah was succeeded by Manasseh, a vile king, who reigned fifty-five years, and re-established idolatry. His son, Amon,

reigned two years, and did evil as his father had done, and his servants slew him. His son and successor was the good Josiah, who began to reign when but eight years of age. After he had arrived to manhood, he ordered his ministers to repair the temple. In doing this, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law, and gave it to Shaphan the scribe, who read it to the king. When Josiah heard the reading, he rent his clothes, being astonished and alarmed that the laws and worship of God had been so long neglected. It is evident that during the long reign of Manasseh, the national worship had been neglected, and all knowledge of the law was lost. Josiah, sending to inquire of the Lord, was informed by Huldah, the prophetess, that, for the idolatry and wickedness of the nation, God would bring evil on the country, but on account of Josiah's repentance, the judgments of God would be deferred, till after his death. The king then convened the elders and people and read to them the laws, and then proceeded to destroy every vestige of idolatry.

205. *Successors of Josiah.*—Josiah being slain by Pharaoh Nechoh, king of Egypt, who invaded the territory of the king of Assyria, he was succeeded by his son Jehoahaz, a wicked prince; but Nechoh put him in bands or prison, subjected the land to tribute, and made Eliakim, another son of Josiah, king, changing his name to Jehoiakim, who also did evil in the sight of the Lord. This prince was made tributary to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, during three years; then he rebelled, and soon after died. He was succeeded by his son Jehoiakin, who, in the eighth year of his

reign, was taken prisoner and carried to Babylon, with his treasures, and a great multitude of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Then Zedekiah, whose first name was Mattaniah, reigned in Jerusalem. But in the ninth year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar came with an army and besieged the city, for two years, when famine compelled the king to flee from the city. But he was overtaken by the Chaldeans and brought to the king; his sons were slain before his eyes, and his own eyes were put out; he was then confined with chains and carried to Babylon. Nebuzar-adan, a captain of the guard, then burnt the temple and all Jerusalem, demolished the wall, and carried captive all the principal inhabitants, leaving only the poorest for husbandmen and vine-dressers.

206. *Reflections.*—The history of the Israelites is full of instruction. God chose that nation to be the depositaries of his laws; delivered them from bondage in Egypt; performed many miracles for their preservation and protection; sent one prophet after another to warn the nation against forsaking God; gave them able and wise kings to conquer the land of Canaan and establish the state; but many of the kings apostatized to idolatry; the people became corrupt; and at last, God executed judgment upon the nation by the captivity of the king and most of the people, and putting an end to the state. Such or similar has been the fate of all corrupt nations; and such will be *our* fate, if we neglect the worship and service of God. God's moral government requires that men and nations, renouncing his authority, should meet with exemplary punishment.

Ezra, chapter 1.

207. *Restoration of the Jews.*—The Jews carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar were detained in Assyria about seventy years; during which that country fell under the dominion of the king of Persia. Cyrus, a celebrated king of Persia, was moved to issue a proclamation for building a temple in Jerusalem; and permission was given for the Jews to return to their native land. The number that returned was more than forty two thousand, besides servants, and the vessels of gold and silver, taken from Jerusalem, were returned. These began to build a temple, but were hindered by their adversaries, till they obtained a decree from Darius to proceed and finish it. After this, Ezra, a ready scribe in the law of Moses, was sent by Artaxerxes to establish the government; and he appointed magistrates, and reformed the manners of the Jews, particularly by persuading them to dismiss all the foreign women whom the Jews had married. Nehemiah also was commissioned by Artaxerxes to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. By these men, Ezra and Nehemiah, the worship of the Jews was re-established; and the temple and worship continued, till both were destroyed by Vespasian, a Roman general, about seventy years after the christian era.

208. *Dispersion of the Jews.*—Vespasian killed or dispersed the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who had survived the famine caused by the siege, and Judea was subjected to the Romans. From that day to the present, the Jews have been dispersed among

almost all nations. In most countries of Europe, not being permitted to hold land, they have lived by trade and brokerage; and such have been the prejudices against them, that in many countries they have been persecuted and oppressed beyond measure. In general, they do not believe in the Messiah, but continue to observe the laws and rites of Moses. In the fate of the Jews, we have a remarkable proof of the truth of prophecy; for Moses foretold that if the Israelites should forsake the commandments of God, they would be smitten before their enemies, and scattered from one end of the earth to the other, and suffer every kind of insult and oppression. See Deuteronomy, ch. 28.

209. *The prophet Isaiah.*—During the existence of the Jewish state, prophets frequently arose, who were instructed by God to reprove the idolatry and other transgressions of the nation. Among these, Isaiah was very conspicuons. He prophesied in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. He wrote in a sublime style; and some of his predictions were so exactly fulfilled, that they may be almost denominated history. One of the most remarkable of his prophecies is recorded in the fifty third chapter of his writings. In this, he speaks of the character and sufferings of Christ, with surprising particularity; and such was the conformity of the facts to the predictions, as to afford strong ground to support the inspiration of the prophet. This chapter in Isaiah was a principal means of establishing the faith of Sir William Jones in the authenticity and inspiration of the scriptures.

210. *Jeremiah.*—Jeremiah prophesied before and at the time of the captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. He was imprisoned first on suspicion of being about to desert his country, and next on account of his unfavorable predictions. He was taken captive with his countrymen; but Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, gave orders that he should be well treated. His writings contain many excellent doctrines, and numerous denunciations of wrath and judgments of God against the wicked Jews and other nations. He wrote the book called LAMENTATIONS, in which he describes the miseries of the Jews in captivity, and the desolate condition of Jerusalem, in a style of inimitable tenderness. He justly ascribes all the calamities of the Jews to their sins. "Jerusalem hath grievously sinned, therefore she is removed." "Our inheritance is turned to strangers; our houses to aliens. We are orphans and fatherless, our mothers are as widows." "The crown is fallen from our head: Woe to us that we have sinned." Such is the feeling strain in which the prophet bewails the sins and the miseries of his nation.

Ezekiel, chapter 1. *Daniel, chapters* 1, 2.

211. *Ezekiel and Daniel.*—Ezekiel, another prophet of distinction, prophesied in captivity, in the land of the Chaldeans. During the captivity also arose Daniel, whose prophesies were very remarkable. This man, in consequence of refusing to be fed with the king of Babylon's provisions, was, with his three companions, permitted to feed on pulse, that he might not be defiled with the king's food.

On trial, it was found that they thrived; and on conversing with them, the king found they excelled in understanding and wisdom. In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar, this king dreamed he saw a huge image, whose head was of gold, his breast and arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of clay, his feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

212. *Interpretation of the dream.*—Nebuchadnezzar was troubled with his dream, and sent for astrologers and magicians to interpret it; but he forgot what it was, and his magicians could not inform him. The king in wrath commanded all such men to be destroyed, and Daniel among the rest. But Daniel remonstrated against the hasty decree, and requested time, that he might show the interpretation. The dream was revealed to him in a night vision, and he communicated it to the king. Daniel then explained the dream as representing his own kingdom, that of the Medes and Persians, that of Alexander, and that of the Romans; and last of all, was the kingdom of the Messiah, represented by the stone cut out of the mountain. This was never to be destroyed. This interpretation gratified the king, and he promoted Daniel to be chief governor, and ruler over the province of Babylon.

Daniel, chapter 3.

213. *The golden image.*—Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits high, and set it up in the plain of Dura; then assembling his chief men, he commanded them, on hearing the sound of mu-

sical instruments, to fall down and worship the image, under the penalty of being cast into a fiery furnace. Daniel and his companions refused, and were thrown, bound, into a furnace of fire, the heat of which killed the men who executed the order. But Daniel and his companions were not hurt; and Nebuchadnezzar himself saw them walking freely in the fire, and suffering no injury. He then directed them to come out, and when he perceived that the hair of their heads was not singed, nor their garments scorched, he pronounced blessings upon the God of these men, and declared that any person speaking against him should be cut in pieces.

Daniel, chapters 4, 5, 6.

214. *Dream of a tree.*—Nebuchadnezzar afterward dreamed of a great and tall tree, reaching to heaven, bearing beautiful leaves, and abundant fruit. Then a holy one descended from heaven, and commanded to hew down the tree, leaving the stump in the earth. This tree Daniel, now called Belteshazzar, interpreted to signify the king himself, who was to be driven from human society, and condemned to eat grass like oxen, till his hair was grown like eagles' fethers, and his nails like bird's claws. This event took place, and at the end of the term prescribed, his reason returned to him, he was established in his kingdom, and he honored and praised the King of heaven.

215. *The hand-writing on the wall.*—Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in honor of their gods,

from vessels of gold which had been brought from Jerusalem. Then appeared fingers of a man's hand, which wrote some words on the plaster of the wall. This made the king to tremble, so that his knees smote against each other. The Chaldean soothsayers were now called, but they could not read the writing, nor interpret the words. Then Daniel was called, and he interpreted the words, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN, to signify that God had numbered the days of the kingdom, and finished it; that the king was weighed in the balances and found wanting, and that his kingdom was divided and given to the Medes and Persians. For this explanation, Daniel was arrayed in scarlet, with a chain of gold about his neck, and proclaimed the third ruler in the kingdom. But in the same night Belshazzar was slain, and his kingdom was transferred to Darius, king of the Medes.

216. *Daniel cast into a den with lions.*—Daniel was now doomed to a severe trial. His wisdom, prudence, and interpretation of dreams, had exalted him in the king's estimation, and he was made first minister or chief over the princes of the realm. This preferment excited the jealousy of the princes, and they sought to find some fault for which they could accuse and degrade him. But his conduct was so upright, that they could not find cause to accuse him. They then agreed to advise the king to make a decree, that if any man should ask a petition from any god or man, for thirty days, except from the king, he should be cast into the den of lions. This was done, knowing that Daniel worshiped the true God, and would

not comply with the decree. And so it was, that Daniel, notwithstanding the decree, went into his chamber, and kneeling three times in the day, prayed towards Jerusalem, and gave thanks. The king hearing of Daniel's disobedience, condemned him to be cast into the den of lions.

217. *Daniel delivered from the den.*——After Daniel had been thrown into the den, the king was very uneasy, and passed a sleepless night. Rising early in the morning, he went to the den, called to Daniel, and inquired if his God was able to deliver him from the lions. Daniel replied, that God had sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, on account of his innocence. At this the king rejoiced, and commanded that Daniel should be taken out of the den; but he ordered his accusers, with their wives and children, to be cast into the den, and the lions tore them in pieces, even before they reached the bottom of the den. King Darius, convinced now that the God whom Daniel served was the living God, commanded all his subjects to reverence him.

Daniel, chapter 7.

218. *Daniel's vision of the four beasts.*—Daniel was favored with a remarkable dream, which was full of meaning. He saw four beasts arise out of the ocean, all differing one from the other. The first was like a lion with wings; the second was like a bear; the third was like a leopard; and the fourth was strong, armed with iron teeth, and of terrible aspect. It had ten horns, and a little horn, and broke in pieces and devoured. After

these things, Daniel beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days appeared on his throne. His garment was white as snow, his hair like wool, and his throne was like a fiery flame; from his mouth issued a fiery stream; thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood in his presence. This beast was slain, and the others after a season, lost their dominion.

219. *Interpretation of the vision.*—Daniel then saw one like the son of man come in the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days, or eternal God, and to him was given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom which should be everlasting, and all nations were to serve him. Daniel was deeply affected, and petitioned to know the meaning of these things. He was then informed that the four beasts represented four kings; which are understood to have been the same as were represented by Nebuchadnezzar's image—the Chaldean empire, that of the Medes and Persians; that of Macedonia or Alexander, and the Roman empire. The little horn which sprung up among the ten, is supposed to be the pope or Romish church. Before this horn, three of the ten fell, and this beast was to devour the whole earth, and trample and break it in pieces. This appears to be a brief, but forcible representation of the enormous power and despotism of the papal see. This enormous power is finally to be destroyed, and the kingdom and dominion of its greatness under the whole heaven, will be given to the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is everlasting. This is the true religion of Christ, which is to triumph, and prevail over the whole earth.

220. *Vision of the ram and he-goat.*—Daniel, while at Shushan, in Persia, had another vision, which was a ram with two horns, one higher than the other, and with these he pushed every way, and no beast could resist him. Then came a he-goat from the west, having a notable horn between his eyes. This goat attacked the ram, broke his horns, and casting him down, stamped upon him. These were interpreted to Daniel. The ram with two horns represented the kings of Media and Persia, and the goat represented the king of Greece, who was Alexander the Great. The great horn or dominion of Alexander being broken, there came four kingdoms in its place; and these represented the four kingdoms into which the dominions of Alexander were divided after his death.

Daniel, chapter 9.

221. *Daniel's prayer.*—Daniel now learned by the books, or prophecy of Jeremiah, that the desolation of Jerusalem, or captivity was to continue seventy years. Jeremiah 29: 10. He was now advanced in life, and this period being nearly accomplished, he set his face to God to seek the restoration of Jerusalem by prayer and fasting. In this prayer he made confession of the sins of his nation, in departing from the precepts of God. "To us, O Lord, (said Daniel,) belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To thee, Lord, belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him." While thus praying, the angel Gabriel, being caused to

fly swiftly, touched him about the time of the evening oblation, and informed him that *seventy weeks* were determined upon the people and upon the holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision and to anoint the most Holy.

222. *Christ foretold.*—"Know then," said Gabriel, the heavenly messenger, "and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem to the Messiah, the prince, shall be *seven weeks* and *sixty and two weeks;* the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after sixty and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and sanctuary." The weeks here mentioned were *weeks of years*, or seventy returns of the sabbatical year, each of seven years; that is, four hundred and ninety years. This is one of the most clear and decisive prophecies of the coming of Christ, contained in the scriptures; and it was fulfilled with great exactness. Christ appeared on earth, and was crucified about four hundred and ninety years after the edict of the Persian king, authorizing the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem; and seventy years after the birth of Christ, the Romans destroyed the "city and sanctuary."

223. *Reflections.*—The prophecies of Daniel are among the most remarkable in the scriptures; perhaps none so clearly foretell the coming of Christ, except the prediction in the fifty third chapter of Isaiah. These prophecies establish the

truth and inspiration of the scriptures, in the most unequivocal manner. It cannot be alledged that these prophecies were written after the events predicted; for they were translated into the Greek language for the use of the Jews in Egypt, more than two hundred years before the birth of Christ. That Greek translation was used and quoted by the Apostles, and copies are now in our libraries. The prophecies of Isaiah were delivered seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, and those of Daniel five hundred years before that event; and the accomplishment of their predictions corresponded so exactly with what was foretold, that the predictions cannot be ascribed to conjecture, or any human foresight.

Jonah, chapter 1.

224. *History of Jonah.*—The prophet Jonah lived before the reign of Jeroboam, for he foretold his successes, 2 Kings, 14. 25. This prophet was commanded by God to go to Nineveh, and denounce God's judgments against that great city, the metropolis of Assyria, for the wickedness of its inhabitants. Jonah was disinclined to this service, and instead of obeying the command, fled the other way, went to Joppa, a port on the Mediterranean, and embarked on board a ship bound to Tarshish, in Spain. [This place, called in pagan authors Tartessus, was a little south of the modern Cadiz.] But a violent tempest arose, and the ship was in danger of foundering. The mariners were alarmed, and cried to their gods for preservation; at the same time, they threw overboard a part of the loading to lighten the ship.

225. *Fate of Jonah.*—While the storm was rising, Jonah was asleep; but when the danger became great, the shipmaster awaked him, saying to him, "What meanest thou, O sleeper; arise, call upon thy God; it may be that God will think upon us, that we perish not." But not content with this call upon Jonah, the mariners agreed to cast lots to discover for whose cause this evil had fallen upon them. The result was, the lot fell upon Jonah, who was a stranger among them. They then inquired who he was, whence he came, and what his occupation. He told them frankly that he was a Hebrew, and feared Jehovah, the God of heaven. He told them also that he had fled from the presence of the Lord. They were alarmed, and asked him what they should do to him, to calm the sea? He replied, that they must cast him into the sea, for it was on his account that this tempest had fallen upon them. They seemed reluctant to proceed to such an extremity, and rowed hard, to bring the ship to land; but being unable, they cried to the Lord that they might not perish on account of the stranger,—and threw him into the sea.

Jonah, chapters 2, 3.

226. *A great fish swallows Jonah.*—Jonah was swallowed by a great fish, which God had prepared for that purpose; and he was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. In this dreadful condition, Jonah had recourse to prayer, for God only could save him. This earnest and pathetic prayer is recorded in the second chapter of Jonah. God heard his prayer, and caused the fish to vomit

out Jonah upon the land; and thus he was saved from perishing.

God now a second time directed Jonah to go to Nineveh, and preach as he should be commanded. Jonah obeyed, and went to Nineveh, a very great city, of three days' journey in extent; there he cried, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

227. *Effect of Jonah's preaching.*—The people of Nineveh gave ear to Jonah's preaching. They believed God, and put on sackcloth, the garment of mourning. The King laid aside his royal robe, put on sackcloth, and sat in ashes, and proclaimed a fast in which not only man, but the very beasts, were to abstain from food and drink. He admonished his people also to turn from their evil ways, for, said he "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn from his fierce anger, that we perish not." And it was so; God, seeing their penitence, repented, that is, he remitted the punishment threatened, and spared the city. This is another example of the mercy of a benevolent being, who desires that none of the wicked should persist in sin and perish; but that they should abandon wickedness and be saved.

228. *Jonah's displeasure.*—Jonah was greatly displeased that God had spared Nineveh. Instead of rejoicing that his preaching had produced repentance, he was angry, and with a rebellious spirit, he expostulated with God, and even excused his own former disobedience, in fleeing towards Tarshish. So angry was he that he prayed that God would take his life, declaring that it would be better for him to die than to live. God reproved

him for his anger; but Jonah was peevish and obstinate, and went out of the city, where he erected a booth, and sat in the shade, till he should know what was to be the fate of Nineveh. And here God still appeared to protect him, by causing a gourd to grow for a covering and shade. This accommodation was very grateful to Jonah.

Jonah, chapter 4.

229. *Jonah deprived of the gourd.*—It is probable that Jonah's peevish rebellious spirit was not yet subdued; and God prepared a worm during the night which killed the gourd. The next day, a violent east wind and sultry heat oppressed Jonah, and he fainted, and again wished to die. The Lord again expostulated with Jonah, and inquired whether the loss of the gourd could justify his anger, Jonah persisted and justified his passion. But God argued with him to show him how unreasonable he was, "Thou," said God, "hast had pity on the gourd; a plant for which thou hast not labored; which come up in a night and perished in a night. And should not I have pity on Nineveh, a great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand infants, too young to know the right hand from the left, and many cattle." What effect this rebuke had on Jonah is not known.

230. *Reflections.*—The story of Jonah is full of instruction. That the story is true, we may be certain from the fact, that our Savior admits it to be true, when he speaks of his own lying in the grave three days and three nights, as Jonah did in the belly of the fish. Math. 12. Jonah attempted

to flee from his Maker, without obeying his command; but in vain. There is no escape from God's eye or from his wrath. Jonah was angry that God did not destroy Nineveh, as Jonah had predicted; perhaps he thought he should be considered a false prophet. But he sinned by being angry: he ought to have rejoiced at the success of his preaching, and the salvation of the city. But he manifested a rebellious spirit. Still God spared him and provided for him a comfortable shade and protection against the violent heat of the sun; but Jonah was not yet humbled and submissive. Then God caused a worm to destroy the gourd, and Jonah still complained and wished to die. God thus rebuked him by showing him how unreasonable he was, regarding with care a gourd for which he had not labored; and yet murmuring that God had shown compassion to the penitent inhabitants of a great city.

231. *Conclusion of the Old Testament.*—After the Jews had returned from the Babylonish captivity, and the national worship was re-established, the Lord continued to send prophets to warn them of the consequences of their sins and rebellion against God. The last of these prophets was Malachi, who lived about four hundred years before the birth of Christ. Several of the prophets foretold the advent of Christ, among these was Malachi. The Jewish state after that continued, but in a feeble condition, and for the most part tributary to the kings of Syria or of Egypt, till they fell under the dominion of the Romans, who possessed their country when Christ appeared on earth.

The Christian dispensation, Matthew 1. *Luke* 1.

232. *Birth of Christ the Messiah of the Old Testament.*—The most important event that has ever taken place in this world since the creation was the birth of the *Son of God*, who was sent to repair the ruins of the Apostasy, and to redeem mankind from the penalties denounced against their disobedience. This event took place in the reign of Augustus Cesar, emperor of Rome, when Herod was King of Judea. The mother of Jesus Christ was Mary, who was espoused to Joseph, a descendant from King David, and the patriarch Abraham. The place of his birth was Bethlehem, in Judea. His name *Jesus* signifies *Savior;* and *Christ* signifies, *anointed*, as does *Messiah.*

233. *Joy at the birth of Christ.*—When Christ was born, an angel appeared to certain shepherds who were watching their flocks by night. He was accompanied by a brilliant light, and the shepherds were in fear. But he said to them, "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for to you is born this day in the city of David, a savior, who is Christ the Lord." He then informed them that they would find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men." This was indeed an occasion of joy, such as angels and men never before witnessed.

Matthew, chapter 2.

234. *Magians come from the East.*—Certain philosophers of the east called Magi, Magians or wise men, being apprised of the birth of Christ, having seen his star in the east, came to Jerusalem, and inquired for him who was born king of the Jews. Herod hearing this, and apprehensive of having a rival King, was much disturbed and inquired of the chief priests and scribes where Christ should be born, alluding to the predictions of his birth by the prophets. They told him, in Bethlehem. Herod then ascertained from the magians, the time when the star appeared, sent them to Bethlehem to find the young child, and then returning, to give him information where he was. But they were warned by God not to return to Herod, but to depart into their own country, which they did.

235. *Destruction of the children.*—Herod, learning that the wise men had disappointed him, was very angry, and gave orders to kill all the children in Bethlehem and its borders, who were not more than two years old, expecting by this stroke to destroy the child Jesus. But an angel had apprised Joseph, of Herod's design, and directed him with his wife and son to flee into Egypt, and remain there till he should be further informed. Thus the child was presevved, and on the death of Herod, Joseph was commanded to retnrn to Judea; but being afraid of Archelaus, Herod's successor and being warned by God in a dream, he went to Naz-

areth in Gallilee; hence Christ was called a Nazarene.

236. *Jesus baptized.*—Jesus Christ was preceded in time by John, the Baptist, who proclaimed the coming of Christ, preached repentance and reformation, and baptized multitudes of Jews. Jesus also went to him from Gallilee to the Jordan, to be baptized by him; but John, doubtless feeling his own inferiority, declined at first to administer the rite of Baptism to Jesus, saying he had more need of being baptised by Jesus; but Jesus convinced him of the propriety of this application, and John baptized him. On this occasion, the heavens were opened, and the spirit of God descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove; and at the same time, a voice came from heaven, saying "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased."

Matthew, chapter 4. *Luke, chapter* 4.

237. *Christ tempted.*—One of the remarkable events which attended the appearance of Christ on the earth, was, the temptation he suffered from Satan, the grand adversary of man. For this purpose, Jesus was led by the spirit into the wilderness, where he fasted forty days and nights. The tempter then proposed to him, if he was the son of God, to command stones to be converted into bread; but Jesus repelled the temptation by quoting a passage from the old testament. Deut. 8: 3. The Devil then took him into the holy city, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, from which elevation he told him to cast himself down, for he said that angels

were charged to uphold him, and prevent his being injured. Jesus repelled this temptation by citing a passage from Deuteronomy, 6. 16, which forbids any one to tempt the Lord. The Devil then led him up a high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, which he promised to give to Christ, if he would fall down, and worship him. Jesus then bid him, be gone, quoting a passage from Deuteronomy, which requires men to worship the true God, and no other being. Satan then left Christ, and angels came and ministered to him.

These temptations were doubtless intended for an example to men; presenting, in the resistance of Christ, a model of determined opposition to every species of temptation and enticement to do that which God has forbidden. This example we should keep always in view for imitation.

238. *Jesus among the doctors of the law.*—When Jesus was twelve years of age, he accompanied his parents to Jerusalem, at the feast, and after the feast, they set out on their return, supposing their son to be in the company. After a day's journey, they missed him, and returned to Jerusalem, where they found him in the temple, sitting among the doctors, or learned Jews, hearing them and asking them questions. All that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. His mother rebuked him for staying behind, telling him that his father and herself had sought him, sorrowing. But Christ gave her to understand that it was proper for him to be engaged in his father's business; meaning the work which was assigned to him by God, his heavenly father.

239. *Sermon on the mount.*—Among the first instructions of Christ, are the precepts and doctrines related in the fifth, sixth and seventh chapters of Matthew, which are usually denominated his *sermon on the mount.* These doctrines and precepts, comprising the most excellent rules of duty towards God and man, ought to be treasured up in the memory of every son of Adam. All our actions should be regulated by them. They raise the mind above all the groveling pursuits of men in this world; they tend to purify all our desires, and elevate them to God and divine things. No man can be a disciple of Christ who does not habitually practice these precepts; the universal practice of them would put an end to half the miseries of this world; and secure to men the sublime happiness of the world to come.

Matthew, chapter 13.

240. *Parable of the sower.*—One of the most impressive modes of instruction adopted by our savior, was by parables. One of these is the story of the sower, who cast seed upon the ground to produce a crop; but in sowing, some seeds fell by the way side, and were eaten by fowls; some seeds fell in stony places, where there was little earth and they withered; other seeds fell among thorns, which choked the grain and prevented its growth; but some seeds fell on good ground and produced abundantly, even to sixty and a hundred fold. In this parable, the seed which fell by the way side represents the hearing of the word by the ignorant and careless, on whom it makes no

permament impression. The seed that fell on stony places represents the hearing of the word by those who receive the word with joy; but have no root in themselves; they are not humbled and penitent; they have no just sense of their own depravity; no godly sorrow for sin; their affections are not sanctified; and when afflictions fall upon them, they stumble and relapse into sin. The seed which fell among thorns represents the hearing of the word by those who permit the cares and pleasures of this life to banish religion from their hearts. The seed which fell upon good ground represents the hearing of the word by such as receive the word into good and honest hearts, who sincerely desire to learn the truth, and live in conformity to God's will. The sower of the seed is Christ himself, delivering the word of God to men. How happily adapted is this parable to represent the manner in which different persons receive the doctrines of the gospel.

Matthew, chapter 14.

241. *Christ feedeth multitudes miraculously.*—John the Baptist was beheaded by Herod, for saying, it was not lawful for him to have his brother Philip's wife. Jesus hearing this departed into a desert for retirement and safety; but great multitudes from the cities followed him, and they had no provisions. His disciples proposed that he should send them away to buy victuals for themselves; but Christ directed them to recline on the grass; then he took five loaves of bread and two fishes, all which his disciples had, and after sup-

plicating a blessing, he distributed these provisions among five thousand men besides women and children. These all ate and were satisfied. On another occasion, Christ fed four thousand men, besides women and children, with seven loaves and a few small fishes. While therefore Christ was giving men instructions in divine things, to secure their immortal felicity, he had compassion on them and supplied their natural wants, by an exertion of supernatural power.

Matthew, chapter 17. *Luke, chapter* 9.

242. *Transfiguration of Christ.*—On one occasion, Christ took Peter, James and John with him upon a high mountain, for prayer, where he was transfigured: that is, he underwent a change of form. His face shone as the sun and his raiment was white as the light. Then appeared to him Moses and Elijah conversing with him, and Peter thinking it good to be there proposed to erect three tents, one for Christ, one for Moses and one for Elijah. While he was speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud declared. "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." The personages then disappeared. Christ when descending the mountain, charged his disciples to keep these things secret, until after his resurrection.

This wonderful event is related not only by Matthew, Mark and Luke; but Peter himself, in his second epistle, expressly declares that he was an eye witness to this scene, and heard the voice. This was a distinguished honor which God bestowed on

his son, and an incontrovertible proof of Christ's divine character and mission.

Matthew, chapter 22.

243. *Parable of the marriage.*—Christ illustrated the invitations of the gospel to the Jews by invitations given by a King for persons to attend the marriage of his son. Servants were sent to invite guests, but many declined. Some went to their farms, others to their merchandise; others ill-treated the servants and slew them. The King indignant that his servants should be thus used, sent troops and destroyed the murderers. The King then sent his servants into the highways, and collected as many as they found, and the wedding was furnished with guests.

This parable represents the invitations to accept offered mercy, given first by John the baptist, and by the seventy disciples who were commissioned by Christ for that purpose. The first invitations being refused, other servants are sent, who were the apostles and first preachers after the resurrection of Christ. These invitations were made to the Jews, who are represented as rejecting them. After that, the servants were sent to collect guests from the highways; that is, the Jews having rejected Christ, the gospel was preached to the gentiles; they accepted the invitation, and were admitted to the privileges of the Lord's people. We are of the number of the gentiles who have been invited to the marriage supper; and many, it is hoped, will be found among the guests.

244. *The man who had not a wedding garment.*—When the King entered the apartment where the guests were assembled, he saw one man there who had not a wedding garment. He asked him how he came to that place without the proper garment; and the man knowing his guilt was speechless. The king then ordered him to be bound hand and foot, and to be cast into utter darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The wedding garment is true religion, or the righteousness of Christ by faith; an indispensible requisite for every person who expects to be saved by his merits. This is the mark by which a true believer is distinguished from a hypocrite. As the man who had not a wedding garment was bound hand and foot and cast into utter darkness; so all men who reject the invitation of the gospel, or expect to be received with a hypocritical show of religion, without repentance, faith and humility, will be rejected at the last day, and banished into a region of misery and despair, characterized by weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew, chapter 25.

245. *Parable of the ten virgins.*—By the parable of the ten virgins, Christ is intended to illustrate the manner in which different persons make preparation for death and the final judgment, and the necessity of having true religion. The parable was taken from the customs of the Jews in celebrating marriages. The bridegroom used to go to conduct home his bride, accompanied by bridemaids carrying lamps. Christ is the bridegroom

of the church; and in this parable, the wise virgins whose lamps were supplied with oil represent real christians who are prepared to meet Christ in judgment; the foolish virgins, who had no oil in their lamps, represent sinners or hypocritical professors who have only a show of religion, and therefore are not prepared for death and the judgment. These, when Christ comes, discover their want of genuine faith, repentance and obedience, and apply to christians for their prayers and assistance; but all in vain; they can have no admission to the marriage supper. The door of salvation is closed against them forever. This shows the importance of constant watchfulness and preparation for death.

246. *Parable of the talents.*—In the parable of the talents, Christs represents the different manner in which different persons employ their powers and advantages. A man about to travel into a distant country, delivered to his servants his goods; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, according to their several ability. These talents they were to use for profit and improvement, during his absence. On his return, he called on them to give an account of the use they had made of their gifts. The first and second informed him that they had so employed their talents as to double the amount. The third told him that he knew his master to be a hard man, requiring more of his servants than they could perform, or than he had furnished the means of performing; he therefore had hid his talent in the earth, that is, he had not used his faculties to any profitable purpose. The master then assigned to the faithful servants their reward; declaring that as they had been faithful

over a few things, he would make them rulers over many things; and directed them to enter into the joy of their Lord, or final happiness. The unfaithful servant he condemned to lose the one talent, and to be cast into utter darkness. The one talent was to be given to him that had well employed his talents. By this is represented that those who improve their time and privileges to good purposes shall be enriched with further additions of grace.

Luke, chapter 15.

247. *The lost sheep.*—In the parable of the lost sheep, Christ represents the condition of sinners who have departed from God, and thus are lost, or exposed to everlasting destruction. At the same time, he shows what sincere desire Christ has to recover even one lost sheep; that is, to reclaim sinners, and bring them back to the care and protection of the good shepherd, or obedience to Christ. He shows also what interest the inhabitants of heaven take in the redemption of men; and what joy they manifest when a sinner is reclaimed.

Another parable states the solicitude with which a lost piece of money is sought by a woman, who lights a candle and sweeps the house till she finds it, and then calls upon her friends to rejoice with her. This is intended still further to illustrate the joy which Christ and his worshipers experience upon the conversion of sinners.

248. *The prodigal son.*—The parable of the prodigal son is adapted to show the ingratitude and rebellion of men, their miserable state when

they have forsaken God, the effect of want and affliction in bringing men to repentance, and the mercy of God in forgiving the penitent.

A man had two sons; the younger requested his father to give him his portion of goods; which request was granted. The son then left his father, traveled to a distant country, and there indulged in riot and luxury, till he had wasted all his property. At that time a famine came upon the land, and the son, being in want, joined a citizen, and was employed in feeding swine. In this low employment he was reduced by hunger to feed on husks, the food of the swine. This wretched condition and his sufferings brought him to a sense of his folly. He thought of his father's house, which he had foolishly forsaken, and considered that his father's servants had food in abundance, while he was perishing with hunger.

This is a striking representation of the fate of sinners who abandon the service and protection of their heavenly father, waste their substance in dissipation and folly, and reduce themselves to wretchedness.

249. *The prodigal returns to his father.*—The miserable prodigal now determined to return to his father's house, and say to his father, "I have sinned against heaven and before thee; I am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants." His father saw him at a great distance, and moved by compassion, he ran to meet him, fell on his neck and embraced him. The son confessed his sin in forsaking him, and acknowledged himself unworthy to be called his son. But the father, received him, not only without rebuke,

but with forgiveness and parental tenderness; and directed him to be arrayed in the best robe, with a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. He then ordered a rich feast to be prepared, that they might eat together with joy and gladness. What a beautiful representation is this of the genuine repentance and humility of a sinner returning to the service of God, and of the readiness of a compassionate God to forgive the sincere penitent, and clothe him with the robe of Christ's righteousness!

250. *Conduct of the elder son.*—The elder brother was in the field, when the younger son returned; and as he approached the house, he heard music and dancing, and calling a servant, inquired what was the cause. Being informed that his lost brother had returned and that his father had received him with gladness and feasting, he was angry, and refused to enter the house, even though entreated by his father. He said he had remained with his father, and been faithful in his service; yet his father had not once given him a kid to feast his friends. But as soon as his brother had returned, after spending all his living in bad company, his father had killed for him the fatted calf. His father however said, he had been always with him in the full enjoyment of his estate; and it was proper that they should rejoice, at the return of his brother, who had been given over as lost.

It is supposed that in this parable, the pharisees are intended by the elder son, and the publicans and other immoral jews are intended by the younger son. But the parable is applicable to all men in like circumstances.

Luke, chapter 16.

251. *The rich man and Lazarus.*—Christ narrates a story which may be called a parable, although in its main points, it describes what really happens. A rich man, clothed in costly apparel, and feasting daily on the richest luxuries, died and was buried. Lazarus, a beggar, who lay at the door, asking for the fragments of the rich man's table, died also, and was conveyed by angels to Abraham's bosom, that is, to heaven or a place of happiness. The rich man sunk into a place of misery, and in torments he lifted his eyes and saw, at a great distance, Abraham with Lazarus in his bosom. He then cried to Abraham, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." This request shows the extreme anguish of the rich man. But Abraham told him, that he had received a full share of good things in the world, but Lazarus had been wretched. He told him further that there was an impassable gulf between them, and of course he could expect no relief. This is a tremendous thought, that the doom of the wicked is irrevocably fixed at death. No prayer avails to deliver them from torment—endless torment.

252. *The rich man's last request.*—The rich man finding his own case hopeless, then sought to notify his five living brethren of his dreadful condition, that they might be persuaded to avoid his fate. But Abraham replied that they had Moses and the prophets, and might listen to their instruc-

tions. This did not satisfy the rich man; he wished to have a special messenger from the dead sent to warn them against coming into that place of torment; supposing such a message would certainly induce them to repent. But Abraham replied, that if they would not hear Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded by a messenger from the dead. The sum of the story is, that riches often corrupt and destroy men, by the enticements of luxury and blandishments of pleasure. The rich enjoy all the pleasures which this world affords, but at death sink into endless misery. On the other hand, the poor despised beggar who can hardly find subsistence from the crumbs that fall from the tables of the rich, is often a pious man, and when he dies he is admitted to the endless joys of heaven.

We learn further, that Moses and the prophets, that is, the ordinary means of grace in a christian land, furnish sufficient inducements to persuade men to repent and accept offered mercy; and that if they neglect these means, they will not repent, though a messenger should be sent to them from the other world.

Matth., chap. 21. *Luke, chap.* 20. *Isaiah, chap.* 5.

253. *Parable of the vineyard.*—To represent the unbelief of the Jews and their obstinacy in sin, Christ delivered the parable of the vineyard, taken from the fifth chapter of Isaiah. A householder planted a vineyard on a fruitful hill, fenced it, digged a wine press, built a tower, and leased it to husbandmen, expecting to receive a portion of its

fruits. That is, God established the Jewish nation, defended them, granted them laws and ordinances, and all that was necessary for their prosperity; expecting they would bring forth the proper fruits of obedience and righteousness. But see the issue; instead of bringing forth grapes, the vineyard produced wild grapes; that is, the house of Israel rebelled against God, introduced idolatry and practiced every kind of iniquity.

254. *Conduct of the husbandmen.*—The Lord of the vineyard, at the proper season, sent his servants to receive, from the husbandmen, the produce; and this was done in repeated instances. But the ungrateful husbandmen abused and insulted the servants; beating one and killing another. At last, he sent his son, saying, "They will reverence my son." But not so; for they said, "this is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize on the inheritance." That is, God sent prophets frequently to admonish the Jews of their departure from him, and urging them to return to their duty and obey his laws; but they disregarded their admonitions, and abused or killed them. At last God sent his son, Jesus Christ, but they rejected him, they cast him out of the vineyard, and put him to death. For this wickedness, God punished the Jew's by an entire destruction. The Romans took Jerusalem and razed it to the foundation, and the nation was dispersed. The vineyard has been given to other husbandmen, that is, the gospel and all its privileges have been transferred to the gentiles, who are to bring forth the proper fruits to the glory of God's kingdom.

Matthew, chapter 25.

255. *Description of the last judgment.*—In this chapter, Christ gives a description of the proceedings of the great day, in which all the human race will receive their final doom. At that time Christ the sovereign judge, will appear in all his glory accompanied by the holy angels, and be seated on his throne. Before him will be gathered all nations, all who have lived on this earth, and Christ will separate them, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. The sheep, that is, the real children of God, will be set on his right hand, the place of honor; but the goats, that is, the wicked will be set on his left hand. Then will Christ address his sanctified and beloved children, in terms that will fill them with unutterable joy and all heaven with praise—"Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And why is this blessed invitation given? Christ assigns the reason; because they had furnished him with food and drink, and clothing, and assistance in distress. They inquire, when they had performed these acts of kindness to him. Christ replies, that as they had performed these acts of benevolence to poor afflicted christians, he received them as done to himself. This is the glorious reward of good deeds, performed in obedience to Christ, and for his followers.

256. *Doom of the wicked.*—To the wicked on his left hand, Christ will pronounce this terrible sentence. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his an-

gels." And why! "because," says Christ, "when I was hungry and thirsty and naked or in distress, ye administered to me no relief." They answer, by inquiring when they saw him in want and distress. Christ informs them that as they had not performed these acts of kindness to the least of his brethren or disciples, they had not performed them to him. He then declares that "these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

Such is the representation which Christ the judge of the living and the dead has given of the transactions of the great day which is to seal the doom, the irrevocable doom, of all the human race. Who can read this description of that solemn day, of the majesty of Christ, his tender and affecting address to his redeemed children, and the awful sentence of condemnation against the wicked, without inexpressible emotions of delight or of horror?

357. *Miracles of Christ.*—The miracles of Christ are among the most convincing evidences of his divine mission and almighty power. At a marriage in Cana of Gallilee, where his mother was present, he converted water into wine for the guests; he healed a leper by a single command, "I will, be thou clean;" he healed a centurion's servant, when absent; he touched the hand of Peter's mother in law, when sick with a fever, and she was healed; he cured one affected by palsy, with a command, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go to thy house;" he cast out many demons or evil spirits, which tormented those who were possessed; and he raised Lazarus from death, after he had been three days in the grave. He instantly

calmed a tempest and quieted the sea, by a single command, "Peace, be still." These and other supernatural works prove Christ to have been indeed the Son of God, and ought to command our entire confidence in his divine character and authority, as the redeemer of the world.

258. *Disciples of Christ.*—Christ, when he first commenced his ministry, selected twelve disciples, who attended him during his life, who heard his instructions, saw his miracles, and accompanied him till his death. These he chose, not from among the rich, or the learned; but from among fishermen and other persons of humble condition. This choice was in conformity with his doctrines and views, for it was evidently his design to show the world that his religion is not at all dependent for success on any talents or distinction merely human; that it has no particular connection with human grandeur, or with political or literary reputation; in short, that it consists in *goodness*, and not in *greatness* either of property, rank or science.

Christ, on particular occasions, employed other disciples, as agents to publish his mission and doctrines; but their agency was temporary.

259. *Institution of the Lord's supper.*—Just before Christ was condemned to be crucified, he celebrated the passover with his disciples. At this supper, he informed his disciples that one of their number would betray him. This information filled their hearts with sorrow. Judas was the person to whom he alluded. On this melancholy occasion, just before the Savior was to leave the companions of his ministry, and suffer an ignominous

death, he instituted the Sacrament, Eucharist or Lord's supper. As they sat or reclined at table, Christ took bread and blessed it and gave a portion to each disciple, directing them to eat of it, as it was his body. Also he gave thanks and delivered to them the cup of wine to drink; for it was his blood of the new testament which was shed for many for the remission of sin. He commanded his disciples to celebrate this supper in remembrance of him. In pursuance of this command, the disciples of Christ continue this ordinance to this day.

Matthew, chapter 26.

260. *Christ betrayed.*—When the time had arrived for Christ to end his ministry on earth, he went to Jerusalem, and kept the passover with his disciples. He afterwards went to Gethsemane, at the foot of the mount of Olives, and directing his disciples to remain there, he went to a distance and fell on his face, and prayed, "O my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Returning, he found his disciples asleep, and said to Peter, "What, could you not watch with me one hour?" He then retired and prayed a second and a third time. Then Judas arrived with a multitude, armed with swords and staffs, from the chief priests, and approaching to Christ, he said, "Hail, master," and kissed him. Jesus rebuked him, but when one of his friends struck a servant of the high priest and cut off his ear, Jesus restrained him and would not permit any resistance; for it was neces-

sary that the scriptures should be fulfilled, and for this purpose, that he should be taken and crucified. Judas and his company then took Jesus and conveyed him to Caiaphas, the high priest.

261. *Peter disowns his master.*—Christ had previously said that all his disciples would that night be offended, that is, desert him or give up his cause. Peter, an ardent man, declared he would not. Jesus told him, that before the cock should crow, the next morning, he would deny him thrice. Peter persisted and said, he would sooner die than disown him. But observe the weakness and inconstancy of the man. Peter followed Christ to the palace or judgment hall, and sat in an outer apartment, where a damsel said to him, that he was one of the companions of Jesus. Peter denied it. He afterwards repeated his denial the second and third time; and then the cock crowed. This reminded him of what Jesus had foretold; and his conscience smote him. He went out and wept bitterly. No wonder he wept. To disown such a teacher, in the time of trial and distress, was, beyond measure, ungrateful.

262. *Trial and condemnation of Christ.*—In the morning Christ was bound and conveyed to Pontius Pilate, the governor, who asked him, if he was the king of the Jews. He was accused by the chief priests and elders, but no positive proof was brought against him, and Pilate was inclined to discharge him. His wife also was troubled by a dream respecting Jesus, and advised her husband to have nothing to do with that just man. As it was customary at the feast, for a prisoner to be released, Pilate inquired of the people whether he

should release Jesus or Barabbas, a robber. The people said, Barabbas; but let Jesus be crucified. The governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? Pilate would have released him; but the people were violent, and said, "His blood be on us and on our children." Jesus was then delivered to be crucified; he was stripped and a scarlet robe put on him; a crown of thorns was set on his head; and then he was mocked and insulted by the populace, and led to the place of crucifixion.

263. *Crucifixion of Christ.*—Jesus was then hung upon a cross, between two thieves, and while he was in the agonies of death, he was insulted by the people, who sarcastically said to him, "If thou art the son of God, come down from the cross." "He saved others, himself he cannot save." Jesus, just before he expired, cried out in extreme anguish, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He repeated his cry, and expired. At this moment, there was an earthquake, the rocks were rent, the vail of the temple was torn asunder from the top to the bottom, graves were opened, and the dead arose; and for three hours, the land was shrouded in darkness! Such were the phenomena attending this great event, the most solemn, the most awful, and the most interesting that the world ever saw.

Jesus, despised and insulted as he had been by the Jews, had friends who loved and honored him. Joseph of Arimathea, a man of rank, went to Pilate and requested that he might have the body of Jesus; which he took, wrapped in linen, and deposited in a new sepulcher.

Matt. chap. 28. *Mark, chap.* 16. *Luke, chap.* 24.

264. *Resurrection of Christ.*—On the first day of the week, early in the morning, Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James, went to the sepulcher, with spices which they had prepared to anoint the body. But they found the stone rolled away from the grave, and an angel appeared to them. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. The guard were terribly frightened; but the angel calmed the fears of the women, telling them that Christ had risen from the grave. "Come," said he, "see the place where the Lord lay." They looked and saw that the body was not there; and went in haste to inform the disciples. On their way, Jesus met the disciples. They did not at first know him; but afterwards, when he was at table with them, he opened their eyes, and they recognized him. He then disappeared; but afterwards he appeared among them in Jerusalem, and convinced them that he was Jesus who had been crucified, by showing them his hands and feet, which had been wounded by being nailed to the cross. He then discoursed with them, opened their understandings, showing them that his sufferings and death were in accomplishment of the predictions of the scriptures; and charging them to go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. He then led them to Bethany and blessed them; and while he was blessing them, he was parted from them and carried into heaven.

Acts, chapter 1.

265. *Matthias takes the place of Judas.*—While the disciples stood looking towards heaven, two angels appeared to them and asked them why they stood gazing; this same Jesus would hereafter come in like manner as they had seen him ascend to heaven. The disciples then went from mount Olivet to Jerusalem, and there continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. On one occasion Peter stood among the disciples, who were then about one hundred and twenty, and spoke concerning Judas the traitor, who had perished by a miserable death. This death made a vacancy in the number of apostles, and it was proposed that another person should be appointed to fill the place. They accordingly appointed two persons, Barsabas and Matthias, and prayed that God would manifest which of the two he approved. They cast lots and the lot fell on Matthias, who was then numbered with the eleven apostles.

Acts, chapter 2.

266. *Three thousand converted.*—On the day of Pentecost, or feast of weeks, the apostles were all assembled, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the house. This was in fulfillment of the promise of the Holy Spirit by Christ. Acts 1 : 8. The disciples were all filled with the Spirit, and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance; cloven tongues appearing

and lighting on each of them. This thing being known, a multitude came together, and were astonished at the fact, that the apostles were speaking in their own languages. There were at that time, men from all the neighboring countries convened, and they were amazed; but some mocked, and said, "These men are full of new wine." But Peter rose and addressed the assembly; telling them that this event was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel 2 : 28. and then gave them a short account of Jesus Christ, his miracles, death and resurrection. The effect of his preaching was immediate and wonderful; the hearers were pricked to the heart, and said to Peter and the apostles, "Men, brethren, what shall we do?" "Repent and be baptized," said Peter. This was a joyful admonition; and those who believed, were baptized, to the number of about three thousand. This was the first great revival of religion.

Acts, chapter 9.

267. *Conversion of Paul.*—The apostles who had accompanied Jesus Christ during his ministry, were eye witnesses of his miracles, of his crucifixion, of his being alive after his resurrection, and of his ascension to heaven; and they personally received his doctrines and instructions.

But Christ saw fit to select and qualify another apostle for the propagation of his religion. This was Saul of Tarsus, afterwards called Paul. This man was a bitter enemy of Christianity; he was present when the martyr Stephen was stoned, and held the raiment of his murderers. As he jour-

neyed from Jerusalem towards Damascus, with a commission to persecute the Christians, he was suddenly arrested by a light from heaven which made him blind, a voice calling to him, "Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?" This was Christ who directed him to proceed to Damascus, and there he would meet with a disciple, Ananias, who would visit him. Thus it was, and Ananias baptized Paul, who received the Holy Spirit, and recovered his sight. Paul being now miraculously converted by Christ, became a most active apostle, and intrepid soldier of Christ, who spent the remainder of his life in preaching the gospel, and contending with its opposers. He was probably the instrument of converting more men to Christianity, than any other man who has ever lived.

268. *Propagation of Christianity.*—The apostles, in pursuance of the command of Christ, soon separated from each other, and preached the doctrines of Christianity to all the nations under the Roman empire. They encountered all the force of prejudice and interest; they were opposed, derided, insulted, persecuted, and some of them put to death with cruel tortures. But nothing could vanquish their zeal, or induce them to abandon the cause of their master. They prayed, they preached, they exhorted, they instructed; and in a few years they had made converts in most of the surrounding nations. They established churches in all the principal cities, which churches were independent of each other, but all provided with teachers or pastors. The apostles were endowed with the power of performing miracles; and the exertion of this power assisted their efforts to convince

the Jews and pagans, of the truth of their doctrines.

269. *Reflections.*—The histories written by the evangelists, and the Acts of the Apostles by Luke, contain narrations of events by far the most important that ever occurred on earth. The birth of the Savior, the doctrines he preached, the purity of his life, and his final sufferings and death, are themes on which angels may dwell with rapturous joy. Well then may men rejoice, when we consider that his appearance, his teachings, his obedience, and his sufferings were designed to redeem an apostate world; to disclose the way by which mankind can be restored to the favor of God, which by their sins they had forfeited; and by which, the penalty of everlasting destruction which they had incurred, may be avoided.

The Christian religion has already changed the aspect of a large part of the world. It has banished idolatry and pagan superstition from many countries; it has civilized and softened the manners of nations; it has mitigated the cruelties of war; it has inspired a spirit of peace; it has raised the female part of our species from degradation and slavery; it has founded charitable institutions to alleviate the sufferings of the poor; it has introduced the true principles of civil liberty; it has begun to arrest the barbarous practice of enslaving our fellow men; it has changed or is changing the character of the whole world. After a lapse of eighteen hundred years, men have learned that they are bound to labor for the furtherance of the gospel; that this is the great, the principal duty of all Christian nations, to which all other schemes

of improvement are subordinate; and the work will prosper; the gospel will triumph, till all men living shall bow to the scepter of Jesus Christ.

270. *Superior excellence of the Christian religion.*—The first and most essential advantage of the religion of the Bible, is, that it proceeds from God himself by revelation. It has God for its author, and truth for its basis. No other system of religion has even a plausible claim to a divine origin. Men without revelation wander in darkness; they have no just notions of the creator of all things; they know not who made the world and themselves, nor why they were made; they know not any divine will or law, nor any authoritative rules which are to govern their actions; they have some crude notions of a superior power, but where he is, or what his character, they are utterly ignorant; hence they frame deities in their imaginations, and worship them; they pay homage to the sun and moon; or to animals on the earth; and making images of their deities, they worship stocks and stones, of any and every monstrous form. Thus they live without a knowledge of God, in ignorance and beastly vices, and die without hope, like the brutes. Such has been the condition of most nations from the earliest ages.

271. *Advantages of revelation.*—It was in accordance with the character of a benevolent Creator, that when he made a rational being, he should make known to him the author of his being, the purposes for which he was made, and the laws by which his reason should be regulated. God therefore revealed to man his character and will. He informs men that his essence is purely spiritual,

and of course invisible to human eyes; that his attributes are almighty power and wisdom; perfect holiness, and pure benevolence; that he is sovereign of the world, and enjoins on all his rational creatures entire obedience to his will; that sin or disobedience to his laws will certainly be punished with eternal banishment from his presence; but that his obedient subjects will be rewarded with endless happiness. Hence, although men must all die, yet there will be a resurrection from the grave, and all men will be judged according to their works; the good will be separated from the wicked; and the destiny of both classes will be irrevocably fixed.

272. *First duties of men.*—The first and most important duty of men, or rational beings, is to make themselves acquainted with the author of their existence, his character and attributes, his will and laws, and what he enjoins us to do or forbear. Of God's character, we may obtain some imperfect notions from his works, from the world in which we live, its structure, its productions, the arrangement of its parts, and the adaptation of each part and every production to its proper use. Our views of the Creator may be still further extended by surveying the heavens, and the harmony of the whole system of worlds. These give us exalted ideas of the Creator. But we must resort to revelation for the more accurate knowledge of God; his attributes; and especially of his moral government, in which we are most essentially concerned. In the scriptures only can we obtain a knowledge of God's spiritual essence, his purity, holiness, truth, justice and benevolence. In the

scriptures only can we learn for what purposes we were made, what God requires us to *be* and to *do*, to obtain his favor and protection in this life, and what is to be our fate after death.

273. *Obedience to God.*—As God is a being of perfect holiness himself, he requires his rational creatures to be holy, that is, like himself, as the only condition of his favor. It is incompatible with God's nature and attributes to approve any thing that is unholy or sinful; his nature repels from himself whatever is in opposition to it; and an unholy being could not be happy in his immediate presence, a single moment. Holiness or purity of heart implies an entire conformity to God's will in principle, accompanied with a perfect obedience of life; or a constant desire and aim at such obedience.

274. *Sin.*—Sin is any voluntary transgression of God's laws; or any voluntary neglect of the duties which he requires. Sins may be either sins of *commission*, that is, *active* violations of God's law; or they may be sins of *omission*, that is, *passive* neglect of duty. The will and commands of God are revealed in the scriptures, with so much clearness, that every person of common understanding may learn from them what he is to perform, and what he is to forbear doing. Hence the first business of men is to read the scriptures, and learn the character and will of God and their own duties.

275. *Moral law.*—The law by which the conduct of men in their several relations to God and their brethren of the human race, is to be regulated, is called the *moral law*. This proceeds from the will of God, is ordained by his authority, and

adapted to promote his glory, and the happiness of mankind. It is sometimes stated in theories, that an action is right because it is useful; and that it would be right on account of its fitness, independent of a divine command. But we can know nothing respecting fitness or unfitness, except as they exist in the works of God; and as he originated whatever exists, his will or purpose must have preceded all created things, and all the relations of things to each other. Whatever is right and useful therefore, must be so because God has ordained it to be the means of promoting his designs in the general system of things; and whatever is evil and mischievous must be so, because God has ordained it to be subversive of his designs.

276. *The glory of God and happiness of his creatures.*—We are told by the apostle Paul, that in whatever we do, we are to do all to the glory of God. The whole system of created things, and their relations to God and to each other, are so adjusted by the Creator, that the actions of his rational creatures, which are essentially right and best adapted to promote their interest and happiness, are in accordance with God's will, and tend to his glory. In a perfect system of things, a God of infinite power, directed by infinite benevolence, would not suffer to exist any discordance, or discrepancy, between moral actions which affect his own character, and those which affect the interest and happiness of men. Such disagreement would imply imperfection in the Creator, which we cannot suppose to be possible.

First Commandment.

277. *Supreme love to God.*—The first and great commandment, Christ has informed us, is, to love the Lord our God, with all the heart and soul and strength and mind. And why? For this obvious reason: that God is the greatest and best being, indeed the only perfectly good being in the universe. This command then is in accordance with our reason, for that which is the best is most desirable, and tends most to our happiness. But in addition to this fitness, gratitude to God, our creator and constant benefactor, demands our warmest affections, for having made us what we are; for giving us all we have; and for offering us all we can desire, in a future life. Besides, supreme love to God leads or inclines us to love his works, his laws and his intelligent creatures. In short, it is the source of all good motives and principles in the human heart; and the exercise of this supreme love is a perpetual source of happiness to us in this life. In demanding this love then from men, God has consulted our happiness no less than his own glory. Here the two things are in perfect harmony.

Second Commandment.

278. *Love to our fellow-men.*—Christ informs us that the second command is like the first, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The reasons are obvious; men are all one family, the children of the same father, formed with like capacities for

improvement and enjoyment, and destined to the same end. The individuals of this great family are more or less dependent on each other; and while each is bound to take care of himself and his connections, he is bound so to conduct his own affairs, as not to injure or annoy his neighbors; on the other hand he is bound by the law of kindness, and the command of God, to do them good, whenever he can do it without injury to himself; and further, he is bound to relieve them in want and distress, even when such relief requires a sacrifice of time, labor or property. And the performance of these duties is accompanied with a reward, even in this life; for it gives us pain to see others in distress; we are always happier for making or seeing others happy. In this we observe that God's command tends to advance our own happiness.

In the two commandments above mentioned, Christ has comprised the substance of the moral law, or the whole of religion. *It is love to God and love to man.*

279. *Idolatry.*—In the second commandment delivered to Moses on mount Sinai, the worship of images, pictures, statues, or the likeness of any created thing, is strictly prohibited. But a large portion of mankind have never known this prohibition, and they constantly worship images. This is idolatry, that abominable sin which God hates; the sin which often brought most terrible judgments upon the Israelites. And if any persons professing to belong to the denomination of Christians, adore images or pictures, or pay homage or divine honors to any created being, they violate the express command of God. "Thou shalt

worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," is the express command of God. Deuteronomy 6 : 13. 10 : 20. Matt. 4 : 10.

The adoration of images, whether made of wood, stone, silver or gold; and of pictures on wood or canvas, is a mark of extreme stupidity; and shows the degraded state of human reason. Nor is it much less stupid to pray to saints or departed spirits. What can they do for men on earth? They cannot know who prays to them, nor what they pray for. They are not present with the worshiper: they are not omnipresent; and if they were, they could not help him. How degraded, how blind, and wretchedly ignorant, must be the persons who believe that pictures, or images, or departed souls, can afford them any assistance!

Third Commandment.

280. *Profaneness.*—Among the sins prohibited by God, is profaneness. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." This forbids all oaths and vain swearing, in which the name of the Supreme Being is used with levity and irreverence. Such use of God's name implies, in the guilty person, a want of due regard to the majesty of God; and it tends to bring his sacred name and attributes into contempt with others. Then, a contempt of God leads to a disregard of his word, and an open violation of his laws. Nothing can be more pernicious than such contempt; for "the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom;" it is the spring, the source of all religion and piety; it is this fear which operates as the most powerful re-

straint on all the evil propensities of mankind; it is that without which there can be no effectual restraint of human passions, of lust, ambition, anger, and revenge. To weaken that fear in the human mind, is a great evil; to banish it, is to destroy the foundation of all religion and morals.

And of what use is profanity? Was any man ever wiser or happier for an irreverent use of God's name? Did any man ever gain respect, or pleasure, or property, by profane swearing? Not at all; it is the most foolish and useless, as well as one of the most low, vulgar vices, that a man can commit. And in females, how shocking, how detestable? In this prohibition then, God, who requires from us supreme reverence, forbids nothing that is for our interest, our honor, or our happiness; but that only which is useless, and degrading to ourselves. Here again is a perfect coincidence of God's will with our own interest and reputation.

Fourth Commandment.

281. *The Sabbath.*—"Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy," is the express command of God. The Sabbath was instituted in commemoration of God's finishing the work of creation. It was enjoined upon men for other important purposes, particularly for giving rest and refreshment to man and beast, when weary by labor; and to give man one day in seven, to be consecrated to the immediate service of God. This service of God is the means prescribed for improvement in divine knowledge; in religious and moral instruc-

tion; which is necessary to guide us in the way of truth and duty in this life, and to prepare us for the enjoyment of heavenly bliss in a future world. In all respects, the sabbath is a most important institution; so important, that where it is not observed, men degenerate not only in religion, but in morals and manners; and become a kind of half savages. What can be more offensive to the author of all our blessings, than a habitual neglect of this institution? How reproachful is it to men, who are every moment dependent on the sustaining power of the Almighty, to refuse a portion of their time to learn his will, to praise his goodness, and supplicate his favors, and the forgiveness of their offenses? The rest of the sabbath is very useful in recruiting the strength of the body, and necessary in the formation of the moral and religious character. In both respects, the command of God tends to the interest and happiness of *men*, as well as to *his glory*.

Fifth Commandment.

282. *Obedience to Parents.*—"Honor thy father and thy mother," is another express command of God. This duty has a special reference to the good order of society. Parents are the natural guardians and governors of their children, during their infancy and childhood. It is made the duty of parents to provide for them food, clothing and instruction; and a sense of this duty is strongly fortified by the affection of parents for their children. In return children are commanded to obey their parents. Ephesians, 6: 1. No duties of men in

society are more important to peace and good order than those of parents and children. Families are the origin of nations; the principles instilled into youth in families, and the habits there formed are the germs of the principles and habits of society and nations. If children are left without restraint and culture in early life, many or most of them will be rude in manners, and turbulent members of society. On the other hand, the subordination of children in families tends to favor subordination in citizens; respect for parents generates respect for rulers and laws; at the same time, it cherishes and invigorates all the kindly affections, which are essential to domestic happiness. In this command then we see the entire coincidence between the will of God and our own interest and happiness.

Sixth Commandment.

283. *Homicide.*—Homicide, or the killing of one man by another is expressly forbid by God's law, "Thou shalt not kill." This prohibition extends to murder, manslaughter and other species of intentional killing. This is one of the most aggravated crimes, which can be perpetrated by men; so enormous is it, that the punishment of it, both by divine and human laws, is death, "Whoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Gen. 9: 6. Life is the gift of God; and neither has one man a right to take another's life without a legal judgment for that purpose, nor has a man a right to put an end to his own life. Suicide as well as murder is a foul crime. If one man were permitted to kill another, what a horrible

world would this be! No man would be safe a single day; we should be in terror by day and terror by night.

But we are not only prohibited from killing others by violence; we are forbid to do any thing knowingly which will destroy life. We are required to avoid any act which, in its consequences, may impair health. Thus we may not sell or give to others unwholesome food or drugs: we may not furnish food or drinks which tend to shorten life; we may not injure our own health, by excess in eating or drinking, or labor; nor can we innocently require such excess of labor in our servants, or demand of them such an exposure, as to put their lives in peril. In this prohibition we see the goodness of God in guarding our safety.

Seventh Commandment.

284. *Lewdness.*—All carnal intercourse between the sexes, except in lawful marriage is forbidden, The evils that proceed from a violation of God's law on this subject, are unspeakably great. The injuries to health, the dissipation of property, the ruin of female character, the destruction of family happiness, and the abandonment of all moral and religious principle, with the final loss of the soul, are among the woful consequences of this wickedness. The institution of marriage was intended to prevent a promiscuous intercourse of sexes, which sinks men to brutes; also to preserve chastity, and to foster all the kind and tender affections that contribute to bind society together, prevent broils jealousy and hatred, and unite mankind in harmony and peace. The man that disturbs the peace of

a family by leading astray one of its members, incurs guilt next to that of murder. The restraints laid upon mankind by the law of God, in this particular, are essential to human happiness.

Eighth Commandment.

285. *Theft.*—"Thou shalt not steal," is the brief command of God, which comprises the prohibition of taking property from others unjustly, in any manner whatever. In a strict legal sense theft is only the taking of property from another *privately* and fraudulently, or with a felonious intent; but in a scriptural sense, it includes robbery and piracy. And why is theft immoral? Because God has forbidden it. But it is immoral also for reasons arising from our own rights. Our right to property proceeds from our personal labor in acquiring it, from purchase or from gift. If a man earns a hundred dollars by his labor, that labor is a *personal* sacrifice, of which the money is the reward. If another man steals that hundred dollars, he takes the value of his services; that is, he has the use of the other man's limbs without a consideration. This would be unjust; hence it is the law of God and of man that every man shall enjoy safely and quietly what he earns, what he buys with his earnings, and what is given or bequeathed to him, as the earnings of others.

286. *Fraud and cheating.*—Every species of fraud and cheating is forbidden in the command not to steal. The methods employed by men to gain property without giving an equivalent for it are literally innumerable. One man defrauds by

concealing the defects of an article which he sells, and obtaining for it more than its worth; another defrauds by substituting one article for another which appears to be like it; another defrauds by selling a less quantity than the purchaser believes to be contained in the vessel or package; another mixes articles together which are of different values, or puts with a valuable article something which is of no value, as in adulterating liquors, drugs, powders and the like. Others defraud in contracts or in labor, performing less than is stipulated. All such frauds are species of stealing, within the meaning of God's prohibition. These and many others are all sinful; highly displeasing to God and injurious to our fellow men. And of what advantage is stealing and fraud? The man who steals or defrauds always feels uneasy, guilt torments him and especially the sight of the man whom he has defrauded, and, if detected, he is doomed to be infamous. If stealing and robbery were permitted the world would be a continued scene of strife and bloodshed. In this prohibition of theft therefore, God's law is as really for our interest and happiness as for his glory.

Ninth Commandment.

287. *Falsehood.*—The command of God on this subject is "Thou shalt not bear false testimony against thy neighbor!" In other words, thou shalt not utter any thing false to the prejudice of thy neighbor. This command forbids all lying, as well as false testimony in a court. Lying consists not only in affirming what one knows to be false; but

in any action that is intended to deceive. This may be by a nod of the head or a motion of the finger. But the prohibition has an especial reference to slander or defamation. This is one of the most common, as well as most mischievous vices. A person's reputation is his most valuable possession; indeed without a good name, a man of sensibility can not enjoy any possession. Slander may be by direct falsehood or lying respecting another; or by propagating evil reports from others, knowing them to be false. Whatever is said with a view to lesson the reputation of others, must proceed from a malignant heart. That which is false ought never to be reported; and in many cases, truth to the predjudice of another, ought not to be told.

288. *Lying and perjury.*—Whenever a man communicates to another that which is false, making him to believe what is not true, with the intention to mislead him, he is guilty of lying. Truth is all-important in the intercourse of men. We are connected in society by a thousand relations in business, which are necessary to our welfare; and which cannot be disturbed without serious injury. Falsehood destroys confidence in neighborhoods, fills men with distrust and jealousy; interrupts the harmonious transaction of business; often occasions loss of property, quarrels, lawsuits and endless broils.

Perjury or swearing falsely in courts of law and equity is the more criminal, as it may produce immense injustice and even destroy life.

289. *Punishment of falsehood.*—What advantage is gained by defamation, lying or perjury? Suppose a person to gain a little property or tran-

sient gratification by deception, what is the consequence? If he is not detected, he must be forever tortured by a guilty conscience, for guilt never leaves a man at ease; and, if detected, he is universally despised and shunned: he forfeits the esteem and confidence of all others, and especially of all good men whose esteem is most valuable; he is distrusted in all his declarations; he is degraded. Such is his punishment in this life. But God is a God of truth; he requires truth in men, and he has declared that "all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone." Rev. 21: 8. In forbidding slander, falsehood and perjury therefore God has established a rule of action for *our benefit*, no less than for the glory of his character, and the consistency of his moral government.

Tenth Commandment.

290. *Coveting.*—The prohibitions in this command restrain us from coveting the goods of our neighbors. We are then not only forbid to obtain by theft or fraud what belongs to others; but we may not even *desire* their possessions, which providence has withheld from us. This desire often or generally proceeds from envy, inordinate ambition, or from discontent with the allotments of providence. This prohibition extends to render sinful all gaming, lotteries and rash enterprises for the sake of gain. We are bound to rest contented with the portion of property which we gain by honest industry and other lawful means. What loads of guilt are incurred by men whose inordi-

nate desire of riches leads them to the use of every species of unlawful means? What detestable and criminal schemes do men devise and practice to gain office and superiority of station! With what envy do the poor often behold the rich, and perhaps when the rich man has gained by laborious industry a condition which the idle and the vicious will not labor to obtain! But all repining at the affluence of others is forbidden by God; and this prohibition is for our good; for without contentment there can be little or no happiness in life.

Eph. 4: 31. *Cor.* 3: 8. *Matt.* 5: 22, 39, 44.

291. *Anger.*—Anger is a passion excited by an injury or supposed injury done by another. It is a passion easily provoked, and too often indulged without restraint. But however difficult it may be to suppress it, in cases of wilful injury; yet the divine commands, and our own peace require that we restrain it. A moderate degree of resentment or feeling of dislike will usually be felt, when we receive an insult or wilful injury. But it is of great importance to accustom ourselves to restrain this passion. We should ever be silent, when insulted rather than to utter an angry retort. If a man insults us or treats us contemptuously, it is better to remain silent and leave him to his own reflections for a time; for he will generally relent, and regret that he has offended. It is a magnanimous act, to overlook an injury, and it never fails to soften the offender and command his respect. Besides anger is a passion that makes a person unhappy, while it lasts; and if indulged to excess,

often ends in further provocation and outrage. The prohibition of anger is therefore for our *own* happiness, as well as for the peace of society and the glory of God.

Rom. 1 : 29, 13, 13. *Titus*, 3 : 3. *Prov.* 3 : 31. I *Pet.* 2 : 1.

292. *Envy.*—Envy is the uneasy feeling which is excited by seeing the prosperity, exaltation or superior good of another. It is a passion that torments its possessor and thus inflicts its own punishment. It implies also discontent with the portion of good which God has assigned to the envious person; and this discontent can never be justified. To overcome this passion or feeling is indispensable to our comfort in life. A repining at the good of others often impairs the health, and always the happiness of men; and it is sure to destroy friendship, alienate those who ought to love each other, and produce hatred and rivalries that interrupt the courtesies of life. In prohibiting this passion, God consults the happiness of men, as in all his other prohibitions.

Jealousy is another passion which torments its possessor; and this, like other evils, proves that whatever is wrong tends more or less to disturb or destroy the comfort and happiness of men.

293. *Revenge.*—Revenge is the infliction of evil on a person in return for a wrong or injury received. This is one of the most detestable practices; it is a hainous sin, and implies a temper extremely malignant. Yet nothing is more natural than a disposition to revenge. It is predominant

among savages and the source of endless hostilities and war. In no one particular is the gospel more singular and superior to all human schemes of morality, than in the doctrine of forgiveness of injuries. This doctrine is a distinguishing trait in the preaching and instructions of Christ and his apostles. Says Christ, "Love your enemies; bless them who curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you." Matt. 5 : 44. The excellence of such precepts shows them to be from heaven; for men, without such precepts, have ever returned evil for evil, injury for injury, blood for blood. The practice of men has filled the world with violence, cruelty, war and devastation; the precepts of Christ tend to soften and allay the malignant passions, restrain persecution, war and plunder, heal the wounds inflicted by injuries; preserve peace between friends and nations, and cherish all the kind and benevolent affections. In short, the restraints imposed on our passions by the commands of God, all tend to our own peace and happiness.

294. *Intemperance.*—By intemperance is to be understood all excessive indulgence of appetites and passions; but more generally it signifies excessive eating or gluttony, and the excessive drinking of intoxicating liquors. Excess in eating or drinking is a beastly vice; a vice by which a man is degraded almost to a brute. Indeed in many cases, the drunkard is in a condition below the brutes, for he destroys the use of his powers and faculties, which the brute does not. All excess in eating and drinking impairs the health, and a habit

of this kind often wastes the property, and destroys reputation and usefulness. Many a life is shortened by intemperate drinking; many a crime is committed in a state of intoxication, which the person, when sober, would shrink from with horror; many a wife and family is rendered wretched by the use of spiritous liquors; and the greatest part of the tenants of the alms house and state prisons are those who have been habitual drinkers of spirit.

295. *Effects of intemperance.*—Temperance in eating and drinkiug insures health, and generally lengthens life. In the days of the patriarchs, there was probably no such thing as distilled spirit, and wine was the juice of the grape unadulterated. To the temperate habits of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it is probable we may ascribe their longevity. It is more than probable that intemperance in eating and drinking, and the luxuries of the modern tables of the rich, have greatly shortened the usual period of human life. If men should drink water only, and eat no high-seasoned provision, using more vegetable and less animal food, there would be fewer diseases among men, and an increase in the length of life. In the indulgence of the appetites to excess and in cookery, men often gratify the taste at the expense of more permanent good, their freedom from dispepsy and other diseases, which annoy, if they do not destroy life. All excess in eating and drinking is forbidden by the laws of God, and this prohibition tends to secure us in the enjoyment of substantial good.

296. *War.*—War is a state of hostility between nations; a contest for superiority, sometimes undertaken for plunder, as among savages; some-

times for conquest of territory; sometimes for a throne; sometimes to avenge an injury or insult to national honor; and sometimes for defense against an invading foe. The only war that can be justified is a defensive war; the resistance of an enemy, that attempts to take our lives or property. We have a right to defend our persons, our houses, goods and lands against an assailing foe. But almost all wars have been undertaken for plunder or conquest; millions and millions of the human race have been slaughtered in fighting to gratify the ambition of monarchs, or the lust of dominion in republics. Men, who are all of one family, are separated into tribes or nations under different governments; rival interests excite hatred; and when such interests rouse the passion for war, men become blood-thirsty and ferocious as tigers. What a heart-rending sight must be a field of battle, when thousands and tens of thousands of men, who ought to live as brethren, are engaged in the horrible work of shedding each others blood! When will nations lay aside the detestable practice of fighting for their rights? When will they constitute civil tribunals to decide national controversies, as suits between individuals are now decided? When will men shake off the remains of savage and barbarous customs, and assume the dignity of christians?

297. *Slavery.*—One of the consequences of war is slavery. In early ages, before men were civilized, tribes of barbarians made war on other tribes for plunder and for prisoners. Prisoners were made slaves, as they still are by some nations. Christianity has abolished this practice among most

European nations; but until within a few years, these same nations have permitted the practice of purchasing prisoners of war in Africa, to be transported to America and enslaved. War is still carried on in Africa, among the barbarous tribes, to take captives to be sold and conveyed to America for slaves. England, France and the United States have restrained their subjects from this inhuman trade; but it is still carried on by other nations. This barbarous practice is one of the most alarming evils of the world; and the consequences of it no mortal can foresee.

298. *Dueling.*—One of the most abominable of all savage customs, that of deciding points of honor or making satisfaction for personal injuries, by swords or pistols, has come down to this day from the times of barbarism. In this practice, our duelists retain the customs of savages. The absurdity of the practice is as flagrant as the wickedness. What! a little petty quarrel, a sharp retort a disrespectful expression, a slight incivility must be punished by an appeal to the instruments of death. Is injury to be redressed or honor preserved, by exposing the lives of two persons, the injurer and the injured? What proportion is there between the offense and the punishment! How does a man atone for an insult to another by firing a pistol at him? and how can a man who has not the heart of a savage, risk the whole earthly happiness of his beloved wife and children upon such an issue? Miserable man a slave to false honor, a slave to his passions, an enemy to himself, an enemy to his family, an enemy to society and his God.

When will the influence of christian principles take the place of a false honor derived from barbarians?

299. *Causes of human misery.*—The two general causes of the sufferings of men, are physical and moral evils. Physical events, such as diseases, storms, famine and earthquakes, are often unavoidable, and in that case are to be borne with resignation to the divine will. Many diseases however and other natural evils proceed from the ignorance, negligence or vices of men, and may be avoided. But moral evils constitute or produce most of the miseries of mankind and these may be prevented or avoided. Be it remembered then that disobedience to God's law, or sin is the procuring cause of almost all the sufferings of mankind. God has so formed the moral system of this world, that a conformity to his will by men produces peace, prosperity and happiness; and disobedience to his will or laws inevitably produces misery. If men are wretched, it is because they reject the government of God, and seek temporary good in that which certainly produces evil.

300. *Folly and absurdities of men.*—God has commanded men to be temperate in the use of his bounties; but men abuse his goodness, riot in gluttony and drunkenness and destroy their health.—God has furnished water in abundance, which man may have with little labor or none at all; and water used only when necessary, never produces disease; but men extract spirit from vegetable substances, and drink to excite lively freelings, which soon subside and leave the body in languor, and the practice, if continued ends in weakning, trembling, decay and death.

God has enjoined benevolence, kindness, charity, forgiveness of injuries, and justice in dealings; but men naturally follow the dictates of selfishness they withhold charities, revenge injuries, defraud their neighbors, and thus excite angry passions, enmities, hatred, lawsuits. Hence instead of social peace and happiness, they are harassed with quarrels and losses.

God has enjoined labor as the means of subsistence and health; but men avoid labor, if they can; they indulge in idleness and resort to vicious pastimes, and waste their time, their money, and impair their health. Men are often their own worst enemies.

301. *Political evils.*—Men, from the beginning of the world, have been devising forms of government best adapted to secure their safety, property, peace, justice and liberty. Numerous forms have been tried; monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. After all their efforts, a perfect government has not yet been found. In the best form hitherto devised, defects have been discovered, which have frustrated the hopes of the founders. And what is the reason? Why the reason is comprised in a few words: *Men have not obeyed God's precepts.* This is the reason, the prominent cause of all political evils. Rulers, when hereditary, are often corrupt men, indulging in all sensual vices, ambition, selfishness, war; in short, they seek their own pleasure and grandeur, rather than the happiness of their subjects. In republics, in which rulers are elected by the people, or some portion of them, the case is sometimes better; but in this form of government men have hitherto been disap-

pointed. Corrupt, selfish men, are often elected, and such men abuse their authority, neglect or violate the laws, and occasion great public evils.

302. *Remedy for public evils.*—The command of God is, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God," 2 Sam. 23: 3. This command prescribes the only effectual remedy for public evils. It is an absurd and impious sentiment, that religious character is not necessary for public officers. So far is this from being true, that it is one of the principal qualifications, for any man making or administering laws. When the form of government admits men to office by hereditary right, rulers may or may not be good men; the people have no choice, and must submit. But in representative governments, if rulers are bad men, it is generally the fault of the people. The electors may indeed be deceived in regard to the principles of the man they choose; they are sometimes most wofully deceived. But in general, the calamity of having evil counselors, legislators, judges, and ministerial officers, is the fault of the electors. They do not regard the precept, to choose "just men, who will rule in the fear of God." They choose men, not because they are just men, men of religion and integrity, but solely for the sake of supporting a party. This is a fruitful source of public evils. But as surely as there is a God in heaven, who exercises a moral government over the affairs of this world, so certainly will the neglect of the divine command, in the choice of rulers, be followed by bad laws and a bad administration; by laws unjust or partial, by corruption, tyranny, impunity of crimes, waste of

public money, and a thousand other evils. Men may devise and adopt new forms of government; they may amend old forms, repair breaches, and punish violaters of the constitution; but there *is*, there *can be*, no effectual remedy, but obedience to the divine law.

303. *Pride and humility.*—The great difference between the maxims of the world and the doctrines of the gospel, is, that human opinions spring from pride, and tend to foster it; whereas the doctrines of the gospel teach humility, and self-abasement. The maxims of the world serve to encourage self-dependence in men, inducing them to rely on their own strength and resources for success, in business or policy, without seeking aid from the Almighty source of power. The gospel inculcates the opposite doctrine; it teaches that "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." It serves to make men humble, and to rely wholly on God for success, not only in spiritual concerns, but in the ordinary occupations of this world. In the pagan world, bravery and human efforts are every thing; and God is nothing. In the christian system, human strength is nothing, and God is every thing. In a christian country then, all government should be founded on Christian principles or should be directed to support them; and to such a system God will give success. All governments of a different kind will produce, as they have ever produced, innumerable evils while they last, and will ultimately sink into corruption and be ruined. All history is a tissue of facts confirming these observations.

304. *The Bible.*—As the will of God is our only rule of action, and that will can be fully known only from revelation, the Bible must be considered as the great source of all the truths by which men are to be guided in government, as well as in all social transactions. Other books, if in accordance with the Bible, may be read with advantage. But a large proportion of the books which fill our libraries have little or no bearing on the sound principles of morals and religion. They serve only for amusement, and occupy time in reading that might be more usefully employed. The first and most important duty of man is to furnish his mind with correct notions respecting God, his laws, and human duty; and then to exert his faculties, and direct his knowledge to the benevolent design of making others wiser and better. It was for these purposes, the revelation of God was given to men; revelations preserved in the Bible, the instrument of all reformation in morals and religion.

305. *Dignity of man.*—The dignity of man, in the view of the world, consists in elevation of rank in society, superior intelligence, and high minded notions of honor. These are qualities which make men respected in society, and are of real value to the possessor. But these qualities may be and often are united, in the same character, with the foulest vices. There is another species of dignity which consists in the abhorrence of every vice, and in aiming at the excellence which has a resemblance to the divine perfections. God is the only perfect being, the only model of all excellence; and no man can be possessed of true dignity of character, without purity of heart, and a

divine principle which elevates the affections above the love of that which God abhors and forbids. Whatever God forbids is degrading, however fashionable it may be, and however esteemed among men. It is our first duty to seek the honor that comes from God.

306. *Consistency of the scriptures.*—The doctrines and precepts recorded in the scriptures all tend to the same point, that of displaying the character of God, and exalting the character of man by bringing it to a conformity with that of God. All vice and crime, whatever God forbids, tends to stain and lower human character; whatever God requires, love, justice, charity, benevolence, and all kindred virtues, tend to elevate human character. All vice and crime tend to annoy and diminish happiness; religion, pure morals and all the virtuous affections tend to produce or increase happiness. As in the physical world, God has made every thing in the best manner to accommodate the human race, and every thing is adapted to that end; so in the moral world, every thing ordained by God is adapted to promote intellectual and religious improvement, and secure to men the greatest happiness of which they are susceptible in their present state of existence.

307. *Men co-workers with God.*—God has not placed men upon the earth to live in idleness. He has made a soil to produce vegetables, but he has left men to sow, and plant and dress the fields. He has created trees, and stones, and clay, but he has not built houses; the materials are made, but men are to prepare and use them. He has furnished the earth and the sea with animals, but he has

left it to men to take, to tame, to feed and to manage such as his wants require. He has deposited water, and coal and other minerals in the earth, where they lie safe without incommoding men; but he has left mankind to dig for them, and prepare them for use.

So in the moral system, God has given powers and faculties to man, and laws to govern him; but he has left men to cultivate their own faculties, and apply them to the discovery of truth, to the invention of useful arts, and to improvement in government, morals, and religion. As in the natural world, the earth, if uncultivated, produces weeds and noxious plants; so in morals and religion, the minds of men, if left without culture, produce whatever is evil, noxious to society, offensive to God and pernicious to human happiness.

308. *The christian religion exalts the intellect and perfects the human character.*—The principal object of religion is to correct the heart and purify it from whatever is wrong and inconsistent with the enjoyment of God. But the sublime views of God and of his works, which the scriptures exhibit have a wonderful effect in strengthening the intellect and expanding its powers. What a sublime description of the ominipresence and omniscience of God, is given in the hundred and thirty ninth psalm? The sacred writers labor for words to express the character and perfections of God. They transport us to an extent in which we are lost in the vastness of their conceptions.

Equally effectual are the scriptures in refining our ideas, by representations of the purity and holiness of God. The more we know of God, the

more just will be our conceptions of what is ennobling in our own conduct; and every step we take in imitating his perfections is an advance in elevation of character. This purity of mind, and this elevation and expansion of intellect are the beginnings of that ever increasing holiness, and that boundless enlargement of knowledge which are to complete the character and the felicity of the children of God, in another world.

309. *Genuine religion.*—We must be careful to distinguish the real religion taught by Christ and his apostles, from those systems which interested men have established. We find the true religion of Christ in the Bible only. It is a scheme wonderfully simple, the principles of which are all comprehended in two short phrases, *love to God*, and *love to men*. Supreme love to God, the source and model of all excellence, is the foundation of the whole system of christianity; and from this principle in the heart flow all the benevolent affections and exercises, which constitute practical piety. The person who loves God supremely, will reverence his character and laws, and will extend his benevolent affections and charities to all his creatures. From this source will proceed love to man, and the careful performance of all moral and social duties.

THE END.

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